THE PROBLEM

America's Quest For Universal Literacy

By Thomas Toch

Education is often called the secular religion of the United States. The nation that was forged by the founding fathers from a collection of British colonies emerged "in an age of exuberant faith in the power and possibility of education," writes the historian Lawrence A. Cremin. "The goal was nothing less than a new republican individual, of virtuous character, abiding patriotism, and prudent wisdom, fashioned by education into an independent yet loyal citizen."

"If a nation expects to be ignorant and free in a state of civilization," warned Thomas Jefferson, author of the 1779 Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge, "it expects what never was and never will be." And in that spirit was born the revolutionary idea of universal schooling.

Today, two centuries later, the United States has established the most extensive and sophisticated system of public education on earth. And even its most ardent critics agree that that system has performed exceedingly well in moving the nation toward the goal of universal literacy.

It is often noted, for example, that a majority of Europeans could not write their names until well into the 19th century. In America, by 1918, each of the states had passed a compulsory school-attendance law.

Measured by rates of graduation from high school, the standard of literacy in the United States has risen markedly. In 1910, only 8 percent of those who started school finished. But by 1948 the figure had risen to 54 percent.

Now, three out of four students graduate from high school, according to the U. S. Education Department, and half of those go on to college.

A greater proportion of the population has at least some familiarity with the uses of language today than ever before, with the average American reading at between a 9th- and 10th-grade level, according to 1980 Defense Department statistics.

Rising Expectations

But as standards rise, so do expectations. And as the nation has reassessed its schools over the past few years, a new notion of general literacy seems to be emerging.

To a long-range planning committee of the Princeton (N. J.) Regional Schools, functional literacy "means more than merely enough reading to decipher written instructions, labels, and want ads or enough writing to fill out application forms and sales slips. These are skills that ... conduce to little more than survival. As educational goals, they aim low, and we must wonder about a society that would think them adequate for any sizable number of people."

"Effective expression of one's own thoughts," the committee goes on to say in its final report, "whether to describe an event, to explain a concept, or to convey a mood, requires not only knowledge of the structure of the language and of the meaning of words, but also appreciation of the provocative power of various ways of using words ... Appreciating the artistry of the poet goes hand in hand with understanding the persuasiveness of the ad writer and deciphering the rhetoric of the politician."

Other recent reports convey a similar message.

The worker of the future must be "a person who is able and willing to learn throughout a lifetime," according to a recent study for the National Academy of Sciences on "High Schools and the Changing Workplace." The report's authors, who concern themselves only with high-school graduates who go directly into the workforce, outline a set of "core competencies" that all graduates need to possess, including an ability to think effectively and be "informed and adaptable citizens and workers."

The National Commission on Excellence in Education speaks of a curriculum of "New Basics" and the emergence of a "Learning Society." It writes in its report, "A Nation At Risk": "America's position in the world may once have been reasonably secure with only a few exceptionally well-trained men and women. It is no longer."

In his study of the American high school, *Horace's Compromise*, Theodore R. Sizer says: "Education's job [today] is less in purveying information than it is helping people to use it."

Some policymakers, pointing to labor-market forecasts showing that the preponderance of new jobs will be low-skilled tasks in the burgeoning service sector of the economy, suggest that calls for a new standard of literacy to cope with a high-technology future are misguided.

But that is a minority view. There is broad agreement among those who have studied the schools and their place in society recently that all citizens will need to possess a high level of literacy to lead full lives and to meet the obligations of responsible citizenry in an increasingly complex world.

The current reform movement thus seems to be posing an enormous and unprecedented challenge to schools. Never before, educators say, have the schools succeeded in conveying the kinds of literacy skills being talked about today to more than a small percentage of their students.

Indeed, the evidence presented in the recent reports suggests that the schools are being urged to set higher standards at a time when they are failing to maintain more modest ones. It is the conclusion of many that the schools in recent years have been graduating students who are less literate than their predecessors.

Less Literate Graduates

John I. Goodlad reports in *A Place Called School*, his study of 1,000 classrooms in 38 schools, that reading occupies only 6 percent of class time in elementary grades, 3 percent in junior-high classes, and only 2 percent in high-school classes.

Mr. Goodlad found that organized discussions, which offer students the opportunity to develop their speaking and thinking skills, took up an average of only 5.1 percent of each class period.

Other studies suggest that students spend an equally small proportion of class and homework time on writing assignments.

Further, a review of 6,000 high-school transcripts from 1964 to 1980 conducted for the excellence commission revealed a proliferation of courses not primarily designed to strengthen students' language skills.

The 10 courses with the greatest growth were: physical education, music performance, remedial English, driver education, cooperative education, health and physical education, distributive education, general shop, training for marriage/adulthood, and vocational home economics.

The same study found that the percentage of students in the less academically rigorous "general" track rose from 12 percent in the late 1960's to 42.5 percent in the late 1970's.

These findings were reinforced by the National Assessment of Educational Progress, a federally supported research organization, in its 1981 report titled "Reading, Thinking, and Writing," a study of the verbal and analytical abilities of 106,000 schoolchildren ages 9, 13, and 17.

It found "an emphasis on shallow and superficial opinions at the expense of reasoned and disciplined thought," two key elements of the new standard of literacy being discussed today.

Even many of those students who are college-bound leave school lacking adequate mastery of the English language,

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Competency Levels for Education

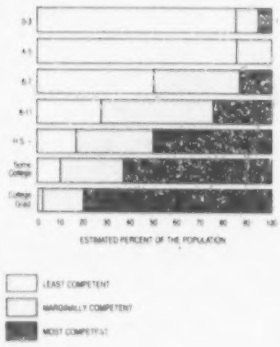

Figure 1:

This graph shows the correlation between literacy and education. For level of education, the percentage of least-competent individuals rises steadily from about 2 percent for college graduates to 85 percent for adults with less than four years of formal schooling.

Competency Levels for Family Income

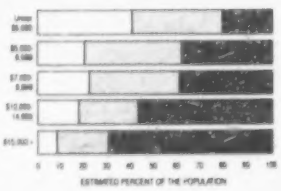

Figure 2:

This graph shows the correlation between literacy and family income. The percentage of least-competent individuals rises from about 8 percent of those with incomes of $15,000 or greater to 40 percent of those with a poverty income.

Competency Levels for Ethnic Groups

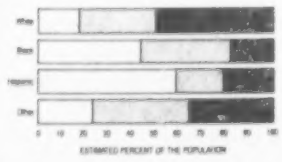

Figure 3:

This graph shows the correlation between literacy and ethnicity. It appears that there are substantial differences between whites and all minority groups. While less than 20 percent of the whites were estimated to be in the least-competent group, more than 40 percent of the blacks and Hispanics were in the least-competent group.

Source: *Final Report: The Adult Performance Level Study*, 1977, Adult Performance Level Project, The University of Texas at Austin.

"We had the best of educations—in fact, we went to school every day—"

"*I've* been to a day-school too, said Alice; "you needn't be so proud as all that."

"With extras?" asked the Mock Turtle a little anxiously.

"Yes," said Alice, "we learned French and music."

"And washing?" said the Mock Turtle.

"Certainly not!" said Alice indignantly.

"Ah! Then yours wasn't a really good school," said the Mock Turtle in a tone of great relief. "Now at *ours* they had at the end of the bill, 'French, music, *and washing*—extra.'"

"You couldn't have wanted it much," said Alice; "living at the bottom of the sea."

"I couldn't afford to learn it," said the Mock Turtle with a sigh. "I only took the regular course."

"What was that?" enquired Alice.

"Reeling and Writhing, of course, to begin with," the Mock Turtle replied; "and then the different branches of Arithmetic—Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision."

"I've never heard of 'Uglification,'" Alice ventured to say. "What is it?"

The Gryphon lifted up both its paws in surprise. "Never heard of uglifying!" it exclaimed. "You know what to beautify is, I suppose?"

"Yes," said Alice, doubtfully: "it means—to—make—anything—prettier."

"Well then," the Gryphon went on, "if you don't know what to uglify is, you *are* a simpleton."

Alice did not feel encouraged to ask any more questions about it, so she turned to the Mock Turtle, and said, "What else had you to learn?"

"Well, there was Mystery," the Mock Turtle replied, counting off the subjects on his flappers,—"Mystery, ancient and modern, with Seaography: then Drawling—the Drawling-master was an old conger-eel, that used to come once a week: *he* taught us Drawling, Stretching, and Fainting in Coils."

"What was *that* like?" said Alice.

"Well, I can't show it you, myself," the Mock Turtle said: "I'm too stiff. And the Gryphon never learnt it."

"Hadn't time," said the Gryphon: "I went to the Classical master, though. He was an old crab, *he* was."

"I never went to him," the Mock Turtle said with a sigh: "he taught Laughing and Grief, they used to say."

"So he did, so he did," said the Gryphon, sighing in his turn, and both creatures hid their faces in their paws.

"And how many hours a day did you do lessons?" said Alice, in a hurry to change the subject.

"Ten hours the first day," said the Mock Turtle: "nine the next, and so on."

"What a curious plan!" exclaimed Alice.

"That's the reason they're called lessons," the Gryphon remarked: "because they lessen from day to day."

From *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll, published by Crown Publishers Inc.

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campus-based studies indicate.

Eighty-four percent of 1,392 colleges and universities surveyed recently by three professors at the University of Texas at Austin said they have established remedial programs in reading, writing, and mathematics within the last several years.

"By and large, freshmen are not conscious of language," says Michael Holzman, an assistant professor of English at the University of Southern California (U.S.C.) who just completed four years as chairman of the university's 3,000-student freshman writing program. "They show very little stylistic creativity and they possess few higher-order rhetorical skills."

Employers have the same complaints.

A recent survey of 514 executives by the Conference Board, a non-profit business research organization, found that 65 percent reported a decline in reading ability among newly hired employees and 74 percent reported a decline in writing ability. About one in five reported that shortages of individuals with such skills affected their operations.

Gauging the Numbers

The precise number of American illiterates is difficult to determine, in part because illiteracy is measured in so many different ways.

The Education Department, using survey results from a federally funded study in 1975 by the University of Texas at Austin and 1980 census data, estimates that there are as many as 72 million Americans who are incapable of performing, or have difficulty with, basic tasks such as reading the label on an aspirin bottle, writing a check, or following the directions for cooking a TV dinner.

"It is surprising, perhaps even shocking," write the authors of the University of Texas study, "to suggest that approximately one of five Americans is incompetent or functions with difficulty and that about half of the adult population is merely functional and not at all proficient in necessary skills and knowledge."

According to Defense Department figures, 10 percent of those ages 18 to 23 read below a 6th-grade level. The National Assessment of Educational Progress also reports that 13 percent of 17-year-olds and 20 percent of adults in the United States are "functionally illiterate." And it estimates that 40 percent of minority youths are functionally illiterate.

In an attempt to obtain a clearer picture of the literacy skills of the nation's young adults, the national assessment will in 1985 begin regular measurements of a range of literacy skills of people ages 21 to 25.

The Education Department estimates that 2.3 million people over the age of 16 join the ranks of the illiterate each year. These include 1 million high-school dropouts, some 400,000 legal immigrants, an estimated 800,000 illegal immigrants, and approximately 100,000 refugees.

The department also estimates that about the same number of illiterates—2.3 million—are reached by government-sponsored or voluntary adult-literacy programs each year.

But that figure does not take into account the unknown number of graduates from high school who have only the barest ability to read and write.

Cultural Literacy

There are also indications that students' level of cultural literacy—their understanding of civilization's and their nation's political, geographic, social, and economic heritage—is also in decline.

So much so, says Diane Ravitch, author of *The Troubled Crusade*, a history of American education from 1945 to 1980, that "the very concept of a common culture is in peril today."

A national commission on the humanities created by the Rockefeller Foundation in 1978 identified improved instruction in the humanities in elementary and secondary schools as the highest priority of its 1980 report.

"Through the humanities," the commission wrote, "one acquires not only literacy but conceptual, critical, and aesthetic capacities as basic as literacy itself. One learns to value cultural tradition and change, active citizenship, and private contemplation."

Mr. Holzman of the University of Southern California also indicts students' training. "They would learn more about American history and values and their context in the world," he says, "if they read *The New York Times* once a week for a year before entering college than they would by going to high school at all."

Mr. Holzman said he and his fellow instructors in the U.S.C. freshman writing program cannot ask any questions that assume any common knowledge among their students "at all."

Substantial Costs

The individual and social costs of illiteracy are immeasurable but undoubtedly substantial.

The 1975 study by the University of Texas at Austin found that 40 percent of adults with incomes under $5,000 a year are functionally illiterate, compared with 8 percent of adults with incomes over $15,000.

According to figures from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, a random sample of 1,000 males between the ages of 21 and 29 who have seven or fewer years of schooling would show that 342 of them are in prison, compared to 11 from a group of the same

size that had completed high school.

The Education Department's office of vocational and adult education reports that the percentage of people with fewer than six years of education who are on public assistance is four times that of people with some high school.

The Department of Labor estimates that up to 75 percent of the 8 million unemployed in 1982 lacked basic reading and writing skills needed to enable employers to train them.

More than a decade ago, in 1972, the Senate Select Committee on Equal Educational Opportunity estimated that $237 billion was lost each year in unrealized earnings as a result of functional illiteracy.

Businessmen say it is difficult to gauge precisely the effect of poor language skills on productivity. But in some cases, they suggest, it is marked.

According to a 1983 study by the Center for Public Resources, the American Telephone and Telegraph Company spends $6 million a year to improve the reading and mathematics skills of some 14,000 employees.

The Scars of Disadvantage

The illiterates in the United States are disproportionately poor and more often than not are raised by parents who are uneducated themselves.

Studies show that often they have grown up in families that cannot afford to buy or do not read books, where learning often is not encouraged and spoken language is at a minimum.

A 1984 study done for the Library of Congress by the Book Industry Study Group Inc., for example, found that book readership rises progressively with income, from 42 percent of those earning less than $15,000 a year to 73 percent of those making $40,000 or more a year.

"To a large extent, they are students of parents who did not achieve in school," says Thomas G. Sticht, who has conducted literacy research, primarily for the military, for many years. "There is an intergenerational transmission of illiteracy."

The 1976 study by the University of Texas at Austin found 16 percent of the whites it surveyed to be functionally illiterate, compared with 44 percent of the blacks.

That there is a strong correlation between family background and literacy is well recognized by educators. Writes Mr. Goodlad in *A Place Called School:* "We now are very much aware, from many studies, that children come to school with varying degrees of readiness to learn. This readiness is significantly . . . influenced by the economic and educational level of parents."

In a study released several months ago, Harold W. Stevenson of the University of Michigan, working under the auspices of the National Institute of Mental Health, found that the achievement of American schoolchildren in reading is lower than that of schoolchildren in Japan and Taiwan from the first years of school.

A major reason, he concluded from his research: Japanese and Taiwanese parents take a much more active role in their children's education, by doing such things as helping them with homework or reading to them informally.

These findings are reinforced by the recent Book Industry Study Group, which found that children ages 8 to 15 who did a great deal of leisure reading were regularly read to by their parents.

The Schools' Dual Mandate

As the nation has struggled in the past few decades to extend the opportunities of disadvantaged Americans, educators have been asked to work with large numbers of students who have come to them with the educational handicaps now well profiled.

It has been a challenging task, teachers say, one made even more difficult in recent years by a surge in immigration that has added to the student population many young people who not only do not understand English but who are often virtually illiterate in their native languages.

"It's not surprising that the schools are having a hard time with such students," says Mr. Sticht. "It ought to be suggestive that the military has always tried to exclude them."

But the current calls for excellence in education, many within the field suggest, must meet the dual mandate of advancing the prospects of both the most able and the least able students, regardless of their family circumstances. To what degree, they ask, will the various reform proposals benefit the broad range of students who will be affected by them?

Other observers of the reform movement also point out that pervasive societal changes—now well documented—are diverting the attention of all students from school and specifically from developing their language skills.

These developments range from the distractive influence of television and after-school jobs to a decline in parental supervision and a general devaluation of the written word in an increasingly visually oriented culture.

The study by the Book Industry Study Group, for example, found that the percentage of readers between the ages of 16 and 21 dropped from 75 percent in 1978 to 63 percent in 1983.

As the movement under way to improve the schools evolves, the debate will continue over whether, or how well, schools can deal with all of the external influences on student achievement.

But most of those whose ideas contributed to this special report, though their perspectives varied widely, held this view in common: Schooling nonetheless retains a unique capacity both to empower individuals, regardless of their circumstances, and to advance the nation's democratic ideals. And societal pressures notwithstanding, most of the contributors agreed that the entire process begins and remains inextricably entwined with language.

"For better or worse," says Donald C. Mann, a vice president of the Prudential Insurance Company, "the school system is as linked to our destiny as Moby Dick was to Captain Ahab's." □

Percentage of Readers Among the American Public

	1978	1983
Book readers	55%	56%
Non-book readers	39	40
Nonreaders	6	4

Incidence of Reading Books in the Past Six Months (By Educational Level)

Educational level	All adults (percent)
High school or less	43.1%
Some college	68.0
College graduate or more	74.9
TOTAL	**55.9**

Most Important Reason for Reading

Reason	Book readers	Non-book readers
Pleasure/ recreation	39%	22%
General knowledge	27	49

63 percent of women are book readers; 47 percent of men.

57 percent of whites are book readers; 44 percent of blacks.

More than 60 percent of those under 50 are book readers; fewer than 46 percent of those over 50.
68 percent of those with some college education are book readers; 48 percent of those with no college education and 15 percent of those with only grade-school education.

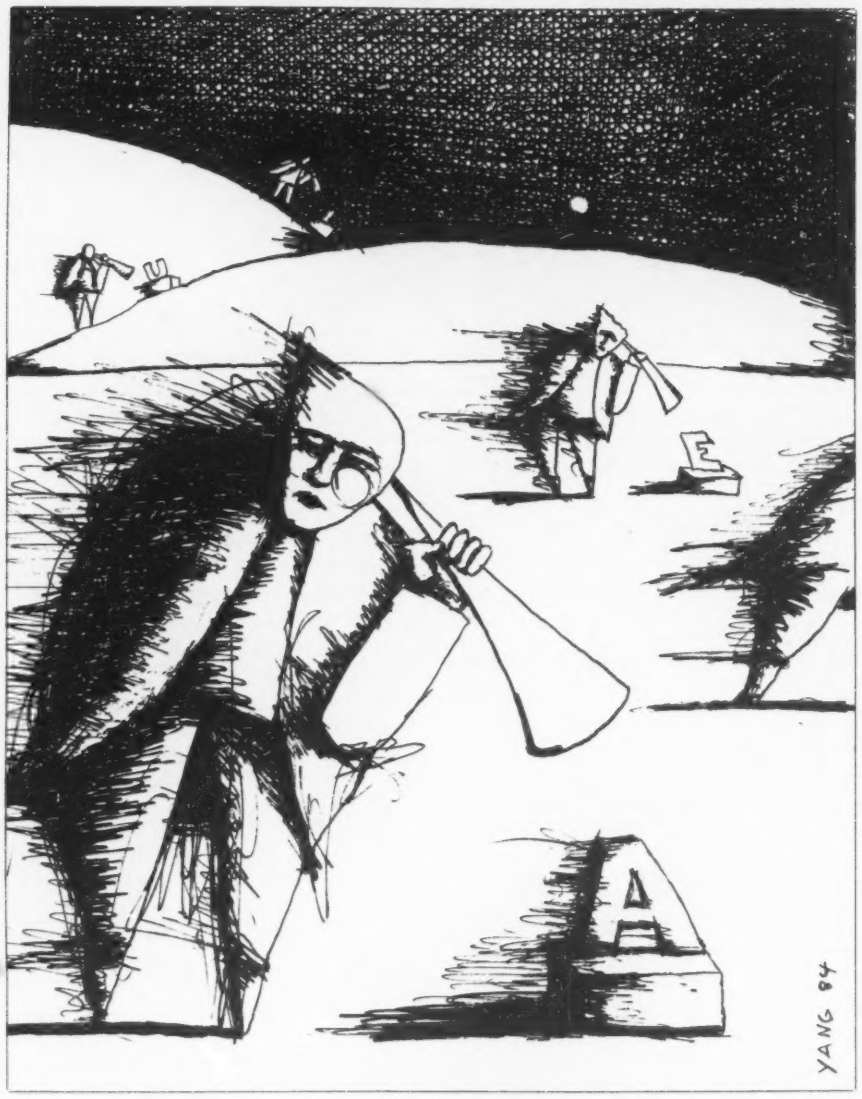
42 percent of those earning less than $15,000 a year are book readers;73 percent of those making more than $40,000.

There was a decline in book readers under the age of 21, from 75 percent in 1978 to 63 percent in 1983.

The percentage of book readers in the 16-to-21 age group declined from 75 percent in 1978 to 63 percent in 1983. This age group as a proportion of the total population has decreased by 2.2 percent so the loss of book readers is disproportionate.

In 1978, 19 percent of the 16- to 21-year-olds were non-book readers, and by 1983 the figure had increased to 29 percent.

Source: *The 1983 Consumer Research Study on Reading and Book Purchasing* by the Book Industry Study Group Inc.



to read as much or as little of a book as one needs for one's purpose, starting at the end, the middle, or the beginning. A reader at stage 5 knows what not to read as well as what to read. To reach this stage is to be able to use selectively the printed material in those areas of knowledge central to one's concern."

The Role of Phonics

The early, systematic teaching of phonics has proven very effective, according to Ms. Chall, who says that children achieve word recognition and comprehension faster with this approach. In addition, she states that "the more direct phonics instruction, in which the teaching of letters and letter-sound relations occurs, even in isolation, is the most effective." But she cautions that "phonics instruction must always be tied back into the reading of stories and other interesting literature. And this is where many schools fall down."

The Harvard researcher reviewed the studies on the effectiveness of decoding methods in both editions of her book. She found that, in the first three grades, children who had direct instruction in decoding were more successful at identifying words than those who did not. A re-evaluation of those studies and the ones that followed led her to the same conclusion in the early 1980's, when the second edition of the book was published.

Other researchers analyzing the same body of data have reached similar conclusions. "[A] repeating pattern of findings concerning both what is taught and how it is taught can be detected if we examine several decades of research," writes Ms. Resnick of the University of Pittsburgh in her paper "Theories and Prescriptions for Early Reading Instruction."

The pattern, she writes, suggests that "when skill in word recognition is the outcome being studied, code-oriented programs tend to show up better than language-oriented programs. This is especially true for low socio-economic groups and low achievers in general. However, when comprehension beyond the very simplest levels is the criterion, there is no clear advantage for either code- or language-oriented programs."

Approval, With Caveats

Many researchers now believe, in fact, that the use of phonics instruction has been overemphasized to the point that reading has become a trivialized process of learning subskills taught separate from and without regard to the content of the materials being read. This view is shared both by whole-language theorists and by supporters of traditional phonics.

"There ought to be some phonics," but it ought to be "a sensible approach," says Mr. Aaron of the University of Georgia.

"Reading is a very complex behavior, and there are many skills involved in being a fluent reader," contends Mr. Samuels of the University of Minnesota. "Phonics is one skill necessary in being a fluent reader. If all we did was teach phonics, we would be negligent in teaching many others."

"The phonics instruction that most chil-

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Reading Demands on the Job

(From a work-site survey of 107 people in 100 different occupations.)

Reading tasks encountered on the job	Percent of total citations (339 tasks cited)
Type of display used:	
Entire book	15%
Part of book: text	19
Part of book: chart, graph, etc.	12
1-3 page text	31
1-3 page chart	21
Other	2
Frequency of use:	
Less than once a month	10
Once a week to once a month	7
Two to four times a week	22
Daily	61
Importance to completing job task:	
Not important	23
Important, but not vital	56
Vital to job task completion	21
Type of general strategy employed:	
Read-to-learn	11
Read-to-do (no learning)	40
Read-to-do (incidental learning)	23
Read-to-assess	26
Readability of materials (measured by FORCAST, Caylor and Sticht, 1973)	
Mean grade equivalent for 106 pieces of material from 57 subjects = 10.9	
Standard deviation = 1.2 grade levels	
Range = level 8.4 to level 13.8	
Reported time spent per day reading job material	
Mean for 107 subjects = 112.5 minutes	
Standard deviation = 119 minutes	
Range = 0 minutes (10 subjects*) to 480 minutes (3 subjects)	
Median = 61 minutes	

* Although 10 subjects reported no reading, 8 of them later in the interview cited reading materials they use "daily." Thus, only two subjects could be said to do no reading on the job.

Source: "The Nature of Reading at Work," by William A. Diehl and Larry Mikulecky in the *Journal of Reading*, December 1980, pp. 221-27.

Teachers who find ways to involve parents in helping their children learn at home may benefit themselves and their students, suggests a recent study of 3,698 1st-, 3rd-, and 5th-grade teachers and principals in 600 public schools in Maryland, conducted by researchers at the Center for the Social Organization of Schools at The Johns Hopkins University.

"School policies regarding parent involvement," writes Joyce L. Epstein of the center in *Learning Horizons*, "sometimes force a choice between parent involvement at school and parent involvement at home. Having parents *at school* helps teachers feel more comfortable about asking them to help their children with learning activities at home. These effects are modest, however, and many other factors influence how teachers involve parents. On the other hand, if teachers frequently involve parents in education activities with their children *at home*, consistent, important effects are noted on parents' ideas and knowledge about helping their children and on parents' evaluations of teachers' merits . . .

"If schools had to choose only one policy to stress, these results suggest that the most payoff for the most parents comes from teachers involving parents in helping their children learn at home."

TEACHING

'It All Starts In Elementary School'

By Linda Chion-Kenney

Starting students down the path to fluency in reading and writing is one of Pamela Walkup's principal responsibilities.

Yet despite the well-publicized charge that the nation is "at risk" because too many students never attain that fluency, critical attention has, for the most part, bypassed Ms. Walkup's elementary-level classroom, seeking rather to generate reform in the nation's high schools.

That does not surprise her, the Alexandria, Va., 1st-grade teacher says. "I think the secondary school's a lot more visible," she explains. "Students there take the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the scores are published, and it's a lot easier to ascertain problems. Also, the children are older and they can verbalize their problems themselves."

Nonetheless, she adds, "it all starts in elementary school and giving the child the proper background." That background, she says, includes a mastery of the "basic skills"; good work and study habits; a positive self-image; and a working relationship with adults and peers.

"Those are all things," she says, "that contribute greatly to the child's success through school."

'I Love To Teach'

The desire to "contribute" to a child's development appears to be a distinguishing characteristic of the approximately 1.2 million people, around 85 percent of them women, who instruct some 23.4 million students attending public elementary schools across the country. Fully 97 percent of elementary-level teachers polled by the Louis Harris firm for a new nationwide survey of teacher attitudes concurred with the statement "I love to teach."

"I don't see [teaching] as any spiritual need that I need to fulfill, but I do enjoy the children," the 39-year-old Ms. Walkup says. "I guess I like to think that I help them get on with their lives, but most important, I enjoy working with them."

Such expressions of commitment emerge in conversations with elementary-level teachers despite the fact that many believe, according to the Harris poll, that they are not "respected in today's society (52 percent of those polled); have to spend too much time on administrative tasks (75 percent of those polled); do not earn "a decent salary" (61 percent); and would not "advise a young person to pursue a career in teaching" (54 percent).

As a group, the poll indicates, they are experienced teachers—73 percent have been in the classroom for at least 10 years and their median age is 40.5 years. In conversations, individual teachers suggest that they are willing and eager to be involved in efforts to improve schooling but point out that the constraints on their effectiveness are many and poorly understood by those calling for school reform. Seventy-two percent of the elementary and secondary teachers surveyed in the Harris poll said their voices "had not been adequately heard" in the current debate about education.

'It's a Losing Battle'

At the elementary level, teachers say, instruction in the formal curriculum—language arts, arithmetic, social studies, and science—is only one aspect of how they spend their professional time. Life in the classroom, they say, is a hodgepodge of activities that is greatly affected by their students' preschool and home experiences.

In addition to teaching, the teachers say their job is to collect milk money, take lunch count, tie shoes, check for lice, provide positive role models, and take over where the family has fallen short.

"Whatever problem they have is my problem," says James Harris, a reading teacher for grades 4 through 6 at Wedowee Elementary School in a rural town 85 miles west of Atlanta. "If a pupil comes to school hungry, I just might take him down and get him a carton of milk. If he comes in with his foot hurting, I just get the alcohol and rub it on his foot. You can't teach a kid who's hungry. You can't teach a kid who's hurting."

Margaret Delia, who has taught for 15 years, first in New York City and now in 3rd-grade classes in Alexandria, says she enjoys giving children "success at an early age so they can continue to feel good about themselves and perhaps be more successful." She deplores, however, the lack of parental support and interest in helping a child improve skills at home.

"When you don't have parents supporting you," she said, "sometimes it's a losing battle."

Asks her colleague Bill Jacobson, a 6th-grade teacher: "What do you do when you call up a parent and say, 'Your kid's causing problems in school, he's not getting his work done, he's genuinely having trouble,' and the parent says, 'Look, I've got three other kids, one is in high school, I had to go down and get him from the jail or juvenile court or whatever, I don't have time to deal with this kid'?"

"Or," adds Barbara Tomlinson, a 1st-grade teacher in the same school district, "they just beat the kid up."

"The kid comes to school the next day very, very submissive and you know what happened," Mr. Jacobson says. "So the next time he doesn't do his homework, do you still call home? So I become a father. I try to deal with it the best I can."

In the Harris poll, which was conducted for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 41 percent of elementary teachers surveyed ranked parental and community support for their school as fair or poor. "This contributes," a summary of the poll's findings states, "to teachers' feelings that they are isolated from the larger community in facing the problems in school."

Single-Parent Homes

Edith F. Etter, a 2nd-grade teacher in Thief River Falls, Minn., and a classroom in-

structor for 31 years, agrees with the findings of some studies in recent years that have pointed to a relationship between the increase in single-parent homes and the classroom performance of students.

In his book, *A Place Called School*, John I. Goodlad notes that almost 45 percent of children born today can expect to be living with only one parent before they reach age 18.

"The child has to endure greater responsibility at a younger age," Ms. Etter suggests, "and understand why father and mother cannot live together and where he has to fit in the picture."

"I also see that parents are under more stress, and perhaps that carries over into the children and the children become stress-filled," she adds. "The children have a lot more on their minds than is necessary for the average child. They're unable to concentrate on the basic lesson of the day."

It is also frustrating, Ms. Delia says, when a teacher asks a parent for support, and ends up "teaching a parent how to set up behavior modification at home. The child has no responsibilities at home. He doesn't even have to make his bed. Even manners we have to teach."

Growing Academic Gap

In addition to solving problems of discipline and manners, elementary teachers are typically faced with the problem of devising learning strategies for classes representing an increasingly broad range of abilities.

"One of the things that we have noticed is that the academic gap among a group of youngsters coming into public schools is increasing," says Samuel G. Sava, executive director of the National Association of Elementary School Principals. "We're guessing it's probably due in part to the fact that a number of the youngsters are attending quality day-care centers or early-childhood centers and some are not."

"There's always been a gap, a two-and-a-half-year gap," he adds. "But now it's increasing even more, to maybe three and a half years."

In 1st grade, Ms. Walkup of Alexandria says, "we get children who don't know their colors, who don't know left from right, who have never even held a book. And then we get children who come in and can read. That's a wide range."

'They Never Catch Up'

The initial disparity makes painfully obvious, the teachers say, the difference that parental involvement can make in a child's preparation for school. Some parents, they note, never read to their children or nurture their early desires to learn. "When these children enter school," Mr. Harris says, "they start off behind and never catch up."

Moreover, the teachers point out, many parents cannot afford to send their children to well-run day-care or preschool programs, where some children get a jump on learning.

"I don't truly believe this," Ms. Walkup says, "but there's a part of me that would love for the state to take these children at birth and give them all the same opportunities and preschool training. But there's another part of me that recognizes the need for the family to have that responsibility. . . . I just wish that before people became parents they took some sort of training to realize the types of things you have to do at home before a child enters school to help them get the basic concepts."

Ms. Delia of Alexandria further notes that among educators themselves there is a difference in philosophy about early-childhood education. "You have one philosophy where the children are only taught to socialize" in kindergarten, she says. "Then you have the other philosophy where children are taught regular skills: They learn colors, they learn to recognize the letters of the alphabet and beginning sounds. It really starts at the beginning."

The Need To Individualize

Whatever the reasons, the gap in ability exists, Mr. Sava says, and it requires greater individualization of instructional programs.

Adding to the need for individualization, Ms. Delia notes, is the influx of children from foreign countries who do not speak English. "When we went to college," she recalls, "there wasn't any idea that eventually we'd be swamped with children from Afghanistan, children from Cambodia, and children from Vietnam."

Teachers say that they recognize the need to tailor instruction to the needs of each student but that they are hampered in their attempt to do that because they have too many students and too little time. In the Metropolitan Life survey, 46 percent of the elementary and secondary teachers rated overcrowded classes as a very or somewhat serious problem.

According to Mr. Sava, the ideal classroom for primary grades would involve one teacher for every 15 students. In the upper elementary grades, the ideal ratio would be 1 to 20.

In its 1980-81, and most recent, report on the "Status of the American Public School Teacher," the National Education Association reported an average of 25 students in nondepartmentalized elementary-school classrooms.

"You have to prioritize where it's needed most," says Ms. Walkup. "There aren't enough hours in the day to individualize every subject, but it should be that way. We definitely put a strong emphasis on [individualization] in reading, math, spelling, English, and writing."

Making the school day longer, however, is not necessarily the answer, teachers say, noting that fewer interruptions and less paperwork would allow them to use their time more effectively.

In his study of elementary schools, Mr. Goodlad found that only about 73 percent of the classroom time was spent on instruction. Of that time, only about 54 percent was dedicated to reading, language arts, and mathematics.

Besides taking attendance, taking lunch count, collecting milk money, disciplining students, and conducting skills' tests for administrative purposes, some teachers say their day is further interrupted by inherent scheduling problems.

"The scheduling in elementary school is terrible," says Mr. Jacobson of Alexandria. "In 7th grade, if a kid plays the guitar, the fiddle, or the bass, he has a 45-minute period in his schedule to do that. In elementary school, the kid gets up in the middle of reading class and comes back in the middle of math class."

"It's not that these children don't deserve these services," says Harriet Beckman, who teaches academically gifted and talented students in grades 4 through 6 in the same district. "It's just that it breaks up the day so that the classroom teacher, who is ultimately responsible for the learning, just has a sense of frustration."

Departmentalized Programs

In the name of individualization, some elementary schools have adopted departmentalized programs, in which each instructor teaches a specific subject. Even in schools where classrooms are nondepartmentalized, some aspect of team teaching or cooperative teaching often takes place.

In Alexandria, Ms. Delia instructs a class of 23 students in all subjects. But Mr. Jacobson's day was broken into "half-hour blocks of time" after he was asked, in the middle of the year, to teach social studies to a 5th-grade class of gifted students in addition to his regular duties as a 6th-grade teacher. The instructor for the gifted-and-talented program, he explains, could not handle all the students assigned to her.

"The scheduling just became horrendous," he says. "Kids were coming in and out. The nice thing about [Ms. Delia's class] is that she can juggle her lessons around. She can have social studies all afternoon so she can get through her point. I couldn't coordinate English skills with reading skills and they're pretty compatible."

Ms. Delia says she likes to teach all subjects to one class because of the flexibility that gives her, and also because it gives younger students "a sense of security and belonging."

Mr. Harris of Georgia, however, who teaches reading to about 175 students a day in grades 4 through 6, believes that a departmentalized system allows teachers to develop an expertise and spend more time developing lessons plans in a particular subject.

'Not Prepared at All'

As unlike as their systems of teaching might be, most teachers in public elementary schools share in common their training in colleges of education. And they are critical of it.

The teachers interviewed agree that they were "not prepared at all" for the classroom experience. The Harris poll found that less than half of the elementary teachers surveyed believe that "the training and preparation teachers receive today does a good job preparing them for the classroom."

"My wife was a registered nurse," Mr. Jacobson says. "From her very first year she was in the hospital working with patients. Clinical teaching is what it was, and we don't get that. I was fortunate because I had a double degree and I taught for two quarters as a student. But that came nowhere close to what I needed. I was lost for a year. How I got by, or how they let me get by, I don't know."

The traditional senior-year "practicum," teachers say, offers too little experience and comes too late in the training. Some say classroom experience should begin in the freshman year and continue until a student graduates. They further maintain that the experience should be spread out among different kinds of schools—urban, rural, and suburban—and among different

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Projected Enrollments in Elementary and Secondary Day Schools
(in thousands)*

Year (fall)	Total public and private Elementary	Secondary
1984	27,113	16,926
1985	27,338	16,828
1986	27,936	16,620
1987	28,660	16,344
1988	29,389	15,969
1989	30,205	15,700
1990	31,022	15,645

* Estimated figures.

Source: *Projections of Education Statistics to 1990-91, Volume 1: Analytical Report*, National Center for Education Statistics.

Estimated Supply and Demand for New Teachers in Elementary and Secondary Schools
(in thousands)

Year (fall)	Estimated supply	Estimated demand
1984	153	142
1985	149	175
1986	169	187
1987	187	192
1988	203	189
1989	220	198
1990	238	217

Source: *Projections of Education Statistics to 1990-91, Volume 1: Analytical Report*, National Center for Education Statistics.

TEACHING

Grade-School Training Unchanged in 50 Years

'We Missed the Cycle of Improvement'

The demand for elementary-level teachers will swell dramatically over the next five years, as schools respond to the enrollment increases that will follow what demographers are calling the "baby boomlet" of the 1980's.

David C. Smith, dean of the College of Education at the University of Florida at Gainesville and president of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, discusses with Assistant Editor Anne Bridgman the nature of professional preparation for teaching in the elementary grades. Mr. Smith is also a member of the National Association of Elementary School Principals and chairs Florida's Education Standards Commission.

Q The apparent decline in the quality of education in recent years is now being blamed to some extent on the failure to teach children literacy skills in the early grades. How do you react to that?

A In terms of the concerns that are being expressed about the quality of teaching, it would be helpful if people would review the performance of American children in the [elementary] classroom as they did with the [Scholastic Aptitude Test], which was the cause for a lot of concern about secondary education. During the period of time in which there was a decline in average S.A.T. scores throughout the United States, there were not parallel declines in reading scores or in mathematics scores at the elementary-school level.

As you look at elementary teachers and the training of elementary teachers, one of the interesting things is that the fundamental pattern of preparing teachers in the last 50 years in this country has changed virtually not at all, in terms of the amount of time that's involved, the proportion of time, and so on.

Before that time, there were major breakthroughs or improvements in teacher training at about 30-year intervals.

My analysis for what's happened is that the next [breakthrough or cycle of improvement] would have occurred in the late 50's or early 60's. But at that point, we were experiencing the post-War baby boom. We had the greatest shortage of teachers this country's ever seen, and nobody was interested in changing programs or dealing with quality. . . .

So we missed that cycle. As a result, we're looking at people with bachelor's degrees and saying, 'Do these people really represent educated people in the minds of society?' They certainly don't when compared with 1920 and the number of people who had [advanced] degrees.

There's a direct relationship between how professional teaching is perceived and the nature of the preparation for that field. In other professions, . . . increases in salaries and self esteem, in every case, were preceded—never followed—by increases in training. That says to me that if there is a way to increase the training to provide the public with a more effective and sophisticated teacher, we need very much to do it.

Q A recent nationwide survey of teacher attitudes suggests that a majority of elementary-level teachers feel their training did not adequately prepare them for the classroom. Do you think their view is justified?

A I think that if you were to do a parallel poll for engineers or lawyers, you'd find a similar response. People, particularly when they've finished a professional program, look back and value most highly those experiences that were most directly related to what they're doing, i.e. the student teaching in the case of education.

When you look at that, the amount of professional education in teacher-preparation programs has declined in the last 20 years. Twenty years ago, there was more such education in an elementary-teacher-preparation program than you'll find today. Not a lot, but back at that period of time, you would find approximately 50 percent, now you'll find 44 percent.

Q Why is that?

A It's because of irresistible pressures to include greater subject-field study at the expense of professional study. Teachers cannot teach what they do not know, but knowledge of subject matter alone is not sufficient to make a person competent in the classroom. We probably know more from a research point of view about the teaching of reading and the teaching of mathematics than we do anything else.

Q Is that research knowledge being incorporated into education-school courses?

A It is insufficiently incorporated into the courses, but I think that in the better programs you find a greater research emphasis. Now, by research, I'm not talking about the broad field of educational research. I'm talking most specifically about that research that directly ties teacher behavior to students' performance—what we call 'process/product research.' That's the kind of research that I think needs to be much more heavily included in our preparation programs than is presently true. However, I do not want to have additional pedagogy in a program at the expense of subject-matter knowledge.

We are in the process at the University of Florida, this fall of instituting a five-year program for the first time. For elementary teachers, it includes additional study in the liberal arts and sciences as background knowledge . . . and it will include an expanded component where teachers will go into classrooms earlier. It will also definitely be much more research-based in terms of content and professional studies than has been true in the past.

Information I've seen recently indicates that approximately 19 percent of the colleges of education in the United States are considering putting a five-year program in the curriculum.

Q What courses are elementary-level teacher candidates required to take?

A Typically, prospective teachers spend 44 percent of their work in the school of education; that will include approximately 9 percent of time in field work, approximately 24 percent in curriculum and methods, and approximately 11 percent of study in introductory courses in education and education-related work—testing and measurements or education psychology, for example.

Normally, the curriculum and methods portion will include such courses as the teaching of science, the teaching of mathematics, the teaching of social studies, the teaching of reading and language arts, and that's probably it.

When you're talking about language arts, you're normally talking about reading, writing, spelling, and speaking. There may be, and this will depend on the university, there may be a course in teaching the language arts, and then another course on the teaching of reading as distinct from the language arts.

Q Do you think that the average elementary-school teacher is adequately prepared to teach the basic literacy skills—particularly reading?

A Yes, I think clearly they're equipped to deal with the basic literacy skills. [They take] two courses that deal with effective teaching of reading skills to primary- and intermediate-grade children. [The courses] are designed to teach people how to organize for instruction in reading, how to plan reading instruction. They are designed to teach the fundamental reading skills that somebody learning to read has to get, i.e., there would be what we call in reading some structural-analysis skills, there would be phonetic-analysis skills, teaching sound, teaching some of the rules

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Elementary Teachers' Reports of Allocated Hours of Instruction Per Week, Averaged By Subject

Early Elementary

Subject	Average Hours
English/language arts	8.46
Mathematics	4.65
Social studies	2.09
Science	1.65
Art	1.50
Music	1.08
Drama	0.10
Dance	0.29
P.E.	1.49

Upper Elementary

Subject	Average Hours
English/language arts	7.41
Mathematics	5.12
Social studies	3.83
Science	2.93
Art	1.29
Music	1.35
Drama	0.07
Dance	0.17
P.E.	2.26

Source: *A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future* by John I. Goodlad, 1984, the Institute for the Development of Educational Activities Inc. Published by McGraw-Hill Book Company.

VIEWPOINTS

CULTURAL LITERACY

Forty Occupations With Largest Job Growth 1982-95

Occupation	Change in total employment (in thousands)	Percent change
Building custodians	779	27.5%
Cashiers	744	47.4
Secretaries	719	29.5
General office clerks	696	29.6
Saleisclerks	685	23.5
Registered nurses	642	48.9
Waiters and waitresses	562	33.8
Teachers, kindergarten and elementary	511	17.4
Truck drivers	425	26.5
Nursing aides and orderlies	423	34.8
Technical sales representatives	386	29.3
Accountants and auditors	344	40.2
Automotive mechanics	324	38.3
Supervisors of blue-collar workers	319	26.6
Kitchen helpers	305	35.3
Guards and doorkeepers	300	47.3
Food preparation and service workers, fast-food restaurants	297	36.7
Store managers	292	30.1
Carpenters	247	28.6
Electrical and electronic technicians	222	60.7
Licensed practical nurses	220	37.1
Computer systems analysts	217	85.3
Electrical engineers	209	65.3
Computer programmers	205	76.9
Maintenance repairers, general utility	193	27.8
Helpers, trades	190	31.2
Receptionists	189	48.8
Electricians	173	31.8
Physicians	163	34.0
Clerical supervisors	162	34.6
Computer operators	160	75.8
Nontechnical sales representatives	160	27.4
Lawyers	159	34.3
Stock clerks, stockroom and warehouse	156	18.8
Typists	155	15.7
Delivery and route workers	153	19.2
Bookkeepers, hand	152	15.9
Cooks, restaurants	149	42.3
Bank tellers	142	30.0
Short order cooks, specialty and fast food	141	32.2

Note: Includes only detailed occupations with 1982 employment of 25,000 or more
Source: U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

'It Does Matter What You Teach'

'But the Question Is, What Do We Teach?'

Education Week: The current school-reform movement seems to encompass widespread concern over the quality of schooling. What does the society have a right to expect from its schools? What is it our schools should be doing?

Mr. Bennett: What we should not be doing is giving a diploma for sitting or for spending time. That suggests the analogy that school is a prison. If you are getting a diploma for just spending time, then you are really doing time and you're not doing anything else.

I think the end of education should be knowledge and skills. And you don't have skills without knowledge.

One of the things that should be very seriously looked at is the rather formalistic definition of education that we have in many state boards of education. That is, that education is the acquisition of skills. We even have definitions of humanities that talk about the humanities as the acquisition of skills. And all sorts of other things are thereby left out.

What should students know? E. D. Hirsch Jr. of the University of Virginia says that when students graduate from high school, they should know about Grant and Lee, DNA, and the First Amendment. They should have some rough idea of what those things mean, a cloudy but accurate sense of the realities that those words describe.

To go toward greater literacy, we need to think more and not avoid the hard question that it has something to do with what is taught. The evidence is pretty clear in the research, the notion that the subject matter doesn't matter as long as students get the skills is not true. It does matter what you teach.

And that creates a real problem for us because we do not have, as we once had, a consensus about what that content should be.

We've had all these reports on educational excellence recommending more course requirements. Now, the people who are the active and thoughtful people in education are saying, 'All right, we may adopt this four years of English, three years of social studies and so on, but the question is, what do we teach in those years?'

If we have four years of English but all the reading is glamorized comic books, that's not going to do it. It's a hard question, given the fact that we are a pluralistic society, and given the particular premium that we seem to be putting on pluralism lately. But it is the critical question.

Mr. Pattison: There is a kind of danger involved in thinking of the body of the population there to be educated as being passive and a lump. The population, after all, has its own theories of what literacy and language are and what it needs to know and why it needs to know it. What you see repeatedly if you teach freshman English is that students don't want to write.

They don't think it's important to know how to write. They don't want to read anything except texts that get them from point A to point B. They want to be taught to read and write so they can make a living, and they see that as the be-all and end-all of literacy.

Mr. Bennett: I would not take that as a conclusion. It is just a condition that students at all levels will resist literacy of all forms. But that doesn't mean we throw in the towel and say, 'Well, that's it. They are interested in TV, I guess I had better toss old Shakespeare away.' You have to push as hard against the age that pushes against you, and there are resistances that have to be overcome. The question again is, can we justify our pushing them ultimately in terms of their own good? I think we can.

Mr. Pattison: The population sees a very great need—certainly the students I know see a very clear need—to know how to read and write on the functional level that everyone says that they should. They can see a practical value in that. When you start talking about giving them a cultural literacy beyond that, I think it is very difficult to explain to them why they have to have it.

Mr. Bennett: There is nothing new about this. This is Huck Finn-ism. 'Widow Douglas took out the book and began to read to me about Moses in the bullrushes. I was in a sweat to find out about what happened to Moses until it turns out he has been dead a considerable long time, so I stopped listening, because I don't take no stock in nothing no dead people say.'

Well, there are all sorts of students running around with the same kind of Huck Finn-ism. That has to be resisted, countered, deployed against with all the strategies and skills that are at the disposal of the good teacher.

Mr. Pattison: Are you really saying that if you had Huck Finn in your classroom you would want to beat that out of him?

Mr. Bennett: You bet I would. Take no interest in dead people? I would say, you are selling yourself very short and you are limiting your education prematurely.

Very few students can identify who Jonathan and David were, but they can identify who Starsky and Hutch are. Now, should I take some nice little relativistic definition of literacy and say, well, they are literate. They are just not literate about Jonathan and David. They are literate about Starsky and Hutch. And then the question is whether there is anything more that they should know or might know by knowing about Jonathan and David that they don't know by knowing only about Starsky and Hutch.

I can give a definition of literacy by which count almost all Americans are literate: the ability to identify the main characters on 'Dallas.'

Ms. Altman: I would fail.

Mr. Bennett: But your students wouldn't.

Ms. Chall: Would you give it orally or in writing?

Mr. Bennett: I would probably give it orally.

Ms. Ravitch: I have a problem with what Mr. Pattison is saying, not because it isn't true, but because I detect a note of passivity in saying that if people want this, that is what people are going to get. Historically, the schools have always tried to raise the level of literacy of the people, because, presumably, teachers knew more than students. The idea of teaching was to educate, to uplift, to raise the level of intelligence.

In the history of the world, most people have always been illiterate and backward, and we are struggling on this planet to spread the realm of literacy, not to give in to the forces of ignorance and barbarism that threaten us.

Mr. Pattison: I am not beginning to claim that we should. I am saying that schools get two very different mandates, which eventually must come into collision. One is to prepare the people so they can be functional in society and the jobs that they are going to seek, and the other is to uplift them in their spirit so that they will read newspapers and say, 'I think the government is corrupt, or this man is wrong.' These are two very different things. And to achieve the one, I think you have to come into conflict with the other.

Mr. Bennett: It is a sentimental notion of education that all criticism somehow is going to turn on and attack and undermine notions of personal ambition or success or achievement. It doesn't necessarily go that way. It isn't that way in the humanities. Not all of the humanities are subversive of the ideals of living in a corporate community.

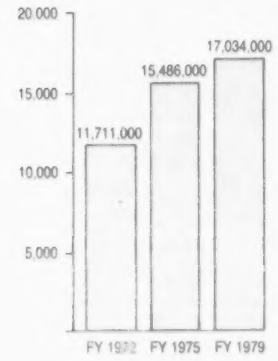
Ms. Ravitch: Even if they were, we could live with it. I was recently visiting with my sister and I was interviewing her kids about what they were doing in the local public school. The 9th grader went through his courses, and I said, 'What are you doing in English?'

He said, 'We are going to be seeing a movie of *Captains Courageous*.' And I said, 'Oh, and then you read the novel?' 'No,' he

VIEWPOINTS

TRACKING

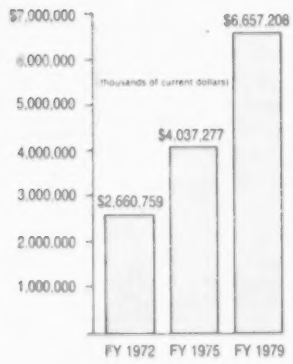
Total U. S. Enrollment in Federally Aided Vocational Education Programs



Total includes secondary, post-secondary, and adult programs.

Source: Bureau of Adult and Vocational Education and N.C.E.S.

Total Expenditures for Vocational Education



Source: U. S Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Division of Vocational and Technical Education, *Status of Vocational Education in 1978*, 1979 and unpublished tabulations; U. S. Education Department, N.C.E.S., Vocational Education Data Systems.

'You Get a Different Curriculum. You'll Like It. It Isn't Challenging.'

Education Week: What is the relationship of tracking to literacy? Is it largely a positive or negative influence?

Mr. Simmons: Oddly enough, I believe in tracking, but I think it's overused and it's implemented too early.

The Japanese system at least gives children during the first six years an opportunity to reach whatever level of potential they can reach. Of course, children whose parents have means have access to special coaching schools that allow their children to do better on the tests they take to get into junior high schools. But still, the ethos of the system seems to be that every child has an ability to achieve, and they want to give them the opportunity to reach that.,

There have been some excellent observational studies over the past 15 years which document that teachers in this country make judgments about students' ability levels, even in kindergarten, based on information about the performance of older siblings, social class, background, etc.

Throwing children to the wolves in the 1st grade and drawing foregone conclusions about what their potential is, by putting them in blue-bird and red-bird groups in the 1st grade, does them a disservice.

We know from the research that there are social and intellectual consequences of being in particular kinds of tracks. Children start treating each other differently and develop conceptions about their own ability or lack thereof that may not be justified based on where they are in 2nd grade or when they're 8 years old.

Ms. Chall: And the children in the first three grades are indeed tracked. Most are grouped, starting with the 1st grade.

Mr. Simmons: What happens in tracking in elementary school is that very early on, different goals are defined, so that one's potential is not limited by one's ability, but by the track one is on.

Ms. Chall: There's a good research study on this topic by Rebecca Barr and her husband, who's a sociologist. I think it's called 'How We Teach.' And it's a very detailed observation of the 1st grade. They concluded that grouping helped children.

Mr. Simmons: The other side is the Ray Rist study showing that grouping hurt. Initially, the children in the classroom treated each other as equals, but then they began to become aware of the groups they were in; they started treating each other differently and viewing themselves differently.

Ms. Chall: So who can you believe? There are two studies. We need more.

Mr. Simmons: Another interesting outcome of the Rist study, which deals with motivation, had to do with the development of secondary learning strategies in the low-ability group. These kids gave evidence of still trying to learn, but they stopped asking the teacher and the brighter students for help. They started relying on each other—in a sense, the blind leading the blind and compounding the problem. And if tracking leads to that, then we are sacrificing something.

Ms. Chall: It's a problem of teaching, too. The teacher has to teach three lessons; that takes a lot of time and organization.

Mr. Simmons: I don't want to put blame on teachers. Teachers are faced with classrooms that can't be managed, given the minimum amount of resources that they have, the numbers of books available, the numbers of students that they have to reach. They are drawn to teaching the teachable and to monitoring and controlling the behavior of the unteachable.

The research tends to document that teachers begin to identify who's teachable, who has the skills and can acquire knowledge—given what the teacher has to give at that particular time—and who doesn't. Teachers then make decisions and group kids within classrooms, even when tracking has been officially denied as a policy of the educational system.

Ms. Ravitch: Lack of resources is not the reason we track. We've been tracking for most of the 20th century. And increased resources have not decreased tracking. In fact, in many of the schools where there's presumably no tracking but a tremendous number of electives, the kids track themselves very neatly. They do it the same way that the guidance counselor would have done it for them.

Ms. Altman: My experience, being a consultant and a principal, where I inherited a school that had tracking, is that if you track whole classes of students, you compound the disability. You do not remediate the disability, because the cross-pollinization that occurs with diversity is not there, and students never see beyond; they never see their potential.

The grouping within a class, for segments of instruction, has worked.

Ms. Christensen: In my teaching career, I've been through about three swings of the pendulum on tracking, pro and con. I've concluded that the key is watchfulness of the teachers involved. There should be a willingness to move students at any time from one group to another. We moved one remedial student into the gifted program, which worked out beautifully. His reading was remedial because there was no challenge in his regular class.

Ms. Ravitch: Maybe I'm wrong, but I think there's a distinction between ability grouping and tracking, although there probably are extremes at which ability grouping becomes tracking.

For example, a friend of mine teaches in a very poor neighborhood. She has kids who don't know the difference between 'big' and 'little,' don't know any colors, and are not even sure what their own name is. How can you deal with such children without ability grouping?

The difference at the high-school level is that the kids who are tracked get a totally different curriculum so that they don't even have any doors open to them.

[The data indicate] that 35 percent of the high-school students are in an academic track, 25 percent in a vocational track, and 40 percent in a general track, which is neither vocational nor academic.

Most of the students on the nonacademic track in high school may have no science. Or the science they have may be radio repair. It's just consumer science or consumer math, and they will have no opportunity then to go into any kind of an engineering or technical program or a college program because their high-school curriculum has been so impoverished that their educational opportunities are very restricted.

Tracking is a terrible, nefarious, invidious practice, because kids get labeled as unteachable very early on. They know it as well as everybody else does. Their aspiration level drops, and the teacher's aspirations are very low.

It's very impressive when you go into a school where they say, 'We think all our kids are college-bound.' They may not all be college-bound, but they are treated as if they are. And that has an extraordinary lift on everybody's psyche in the school.

Mr. Bennett: There is some teacher turnoff to students at all levels because they just assume that students of one race or another can't learn. That's terrible. That's educational triage. That's saying you're out, and they're in.

When I recommend a curriculum that exposes all students to certain areas of knowledge, I'm recommending it for all students. It's aimed particularly at those low S.E.S. [socioeconomic status] students. Otherwise, we say, 'Well, you are somehow disadvantaged, therefore you are getting a different curriculum. You will like this one better. It won't be too challenging.

That has sometimes been done benevolently, but it is still a form of exclusion. It is saying, 'You are not in the club. You're going to learn something else. You're interested in Michael Jackson? Fine. Why don't you do a little paper on Michael Jackson. The rest of us are going to talk about the First Amendment.'

That is not charity. That is miseducation.

Ms. Altman: And it's not equity.

Ms. Ravitch: That's tracking. □

COMPUTERS

The 'Enormous' Potential Remains Unrealized

The number of microcomputers in the nation's schools continues to grow at a rapid rate, reaching 325,000 in 55,765 schools last year, according to Market Data Retrieval, a private marketing-research firm. The numbers suggest that educators remain enthusiastic about the new technology, despite the fact that many computer experts think its educational potential is not being realized and may never be. One such expert, P. Kenneth Komoski, argues that computers can be helpful in teaching across the curriculum, but only if educators make "a commitment to exploit the hardware and do the hard work of getting decent software that exploits the hardware." Mr. Komoski says that "the most important current, and potentially continuing, obstacle is quality software." And he warns that "with continuing inane software, the kids will get turned off."

Mr. Komoski is executive director of Educational Products Information Exchange, a nonprofit organization based in New York that evaluates computer software as a service to school systems. He discusses literacy and computers with Staff Writer Linda Chion-Kenney.

Q What is the computer's potential for enhancing literacy, in the narrow sense of improving students' reading and writing skills, and in the broader sense of improving their cultural literacy?

A I think it's enormous both in the narrow sense and the broader sense, particularly when the computer is effectively linked to videodisc storage of all kinds of images, as it will be certainly within the decade.

I have a 7-year-old. Before she went into 1st grade this year, she was already reading at about a 5th-grade level. And I never tried to teach her to read. But we read to her, read to her, and read to her. I have been in schools where kids don't come from that background and where, with the effective use of computers . . . there have been large steps taken making up for that deprivation. If there were computers in the homes of the culturally disadvantaged, with a good home/school connection, you could accomplish a great deal.

A young mother from Houston [told us] that she had a loaner computer from the school district and had gone through 12 hours of training with her kids after school and they were using the computer at home. Consequently, two things were happening in the family: They were looking at less television and she was also picking up a lot of reading and arithmetic skills that she never had mastered in school. That isn't going to happen automatically. That's going to happen because a school district sees itself as being in the community-education business.

So much cultural stuff could be gotten into the homes. There are some pretty poor videodiscs around, but one that really makes up for the ones that are rather poor is the incredible videodisc that Leonard Nimoy has done on Van Gogh.

You see every painting he ever produced and where he lived. You really understand an awful lot about Van Gogh and his relationship to his brother and the world that he lived in. It's all there for you to access. And it isn't just sitting passively looking at the thing. You can search around and say, I want to know more about that particular painting and there's a lot of backup information on that particular painting.

Q How can computers make significant contributions to the schools' role in teaching youngsters how to read and write?

A If schools see the potential of relating work on computers to work in books, then I think there is a great possibility that computers will in fact stimulate more reading, the way television can if it's appropriately used.

> 'The first thing that schools should do in setting up policy is to ask: What are we looking to do with software? Can we identify things that we don't do too well right now that maybe software can do better?'

In Ontario there's a very large and successful program of developing reading skills around the kid's acknowledged enthusiasm for watching television.

We're only now beginning to see some systematic approaches to the teaching of reading, like the Writing to Read program that the International Business Machines

Continued on Page L47

Schools With Microcomputers

	Fall 1981	Fall 1982	Fall 1983
All public schools	84,225	82,422	81,506
Number using microcomputers	15,328	24,696	55,765
Percent using microcomputers	18.2%	30.0%	68.4%
Elementary schools	53,268	51,940	51,277
Number using microcomputers	5,884	10,467	31,991
Percent using microcomputers	11.1%	20.2%	62.4%
Junior high schools	10,106	9,926	9,846
Number using microcomputers	2,585	3,950	7,922
Percent using microcomputers	25.6%	39.8%	80.5%
Senior high schools	15,589	15,297	15,211
Number using microcomputers	6,051	8,842	13,094
Percent using microcomputers	42.7%	57.8%	86.1%

Number of Computers by Public-School Type, Fall 1983

School type	Number of buildings	Number of computers*	Number of computers per building
Elementary	31,991	114,548	3.6
Jr. high school	7,922	57,734	7.3
Sr. high school	13,094	138,576	10.6
K-12/special	2,758	13,528	4.9
Total	**55,765**	**324,386**	**5.8**

* Projected

Forecasted Microcomputer Distribution by Brand, Fall 1983

Brand	Number of buildings	Number of computers	Market penetration by building*	Market penetration by number of computers
Apple	37,420	160,500	67.1%	49.4%
Radio Shack	13,270	68,200	23.8	21.0
Commodore	8,750	49,500	15.7	15.2
Atari	2,230	9,400	4.0	2.9
Texas Instruments	1,900	6,500	3.4	2.0
I.B.M.	1,170	8,800	2.1	2.7
Other/Unknown brand	4,800	22,100	8.6	6.8

* Total more than 100% because many buildings contain more than one brand

Source: *Microcomputers in Schools 1983-84, A Comprehensive Survey and Analysis*, Market Data Retrieval

COMPUTERS

Today, universal literacy is demanded because the illiterate is unemployable, and indeed, has difficulty surviving. Someday, computer literacy will be a condition for employment, possibly for survival, because the computer illiterate will be cut off from most sources of information. The human brain unaided by computers will appear feebleminded. . . .

Once computers are available in the classroom, we will be forced to rethink what we teach and how to teach it. First, the right way to solve a problem may be different in the computer age. Second, certain traditional topics have become useless. Third, the computer is a powerful tool for solving problems, available both to the instructor and the student. Fourth, programming a computer is an important learning experience for the programmer. Points one and two affect *what* we teach to students, while three and four should drastically change *how* we teach.

From "The Case for Computer Literacy," by John G. Kemeny, in *Daedalus*, Spring 1983.

Continued from Page L45

Corporation has field tested. I have been rather unimpressed with the other computer-based reading programs that are out right now. Some of them are not only poor but they misrepresent what they're doing. We need to develop good interrelated materials involving print and computer programs and materials that are created by the youngsters themselves.

In writing, I think it really depends on the school's willingness and creativity in incorporating word processing into the school curriculum. Now, you've got one computer at a desk for 100 kids or more. That's not going to improve writing skills tremendously. But as children get ready access, and the schools say word processing is something they're going to do, then the impact is just waiting to be made. If schools then put a concerted effort into writing programs and encourage kids to write and have enough printers around to let them see their output, that will just further accelerate the capability of the computer to improve writing skills.

Q Can computers assist in the teaching of critical-thinking skills?

A Critical-thinking skills have never been included in the average school curriculum. It just happens that somehow, because the computer is thought of as a kind of thinking machine and because of the inherent logic of programming, an awful lot more attention is being devoted to the idea that this very logical machine can be used to teach logic and other critical-thinking skills. I think the computer is a vehicle, a medium, and it's calling attention to the lack, the vacuum, that's existed in the school curriculum regarding critical-thinking skills. But I think computers could be an effective help in teaching those skills.

Q What about content areas such as history, foreign languages, culture, and geography?

A Take them one by one.

The teaching of foreign languages can be enormously facilitated by computers, provided you have a program that fully exploits the capability of the computer. The majority of foreign-language-programming right now for microcomputers does not use audio. And that's a joke. It's a travesty on the teaching of foreign language.

History requires a great deal of reading and one doesn't expect to see kids, or anybody, spending the kind of time one spends reading history reading it off a screen. But there are things that can be done in the teaching of history that are again, like critical-thinking skills, poorly done in general.

Research skills are not taught in history. History is taught mostly out of textbooks that are really just about history. Very few have original sources. Just look at the potential of having the entire Library of Congress or the National Archives on optical storage disks, and then being able to make assignments to kids to go in and actually peruse the original documents and excerpt and create a research paper from that.

The teaching of music is going to be revolutionized by the kinds of capabilities that we have now with computers in terms of sound and sound synthesis. You can actually teach reading and musical composition. The computer certainly has the potential to make us musically literate.

Geography can be done very, very well once the marriage of the microcomputer and videodisc technology is secure because of the ability to call up pictures and maps on the computer from a videodisc and to be able to juxtapose places and products. I think the potential there is just enormous. What you see today in geography is learning the state capitals. Most of the stuff that's on computer right now regarding geography is just inane.

Q If you were developing curricula, what role would you assign computers in the teaching of reading, writing, and social studies?

A In writing, the computer, with word-processing software, is like a pencil. I'd assign an integral role, a very, very high priority.

In reading, the computer would be high in the very early stages of reading, where you're developing letter-sound and picture correspondence and association. But I'd assign a much lesser role to the computer in reading as you go along.

> 'It just takes a commitment to exploit the hardware and to do the hard work of getting decent software that exploits the hardware. That just isn't happening right now.'

I would assign pretty selective use of the computer in social studies . . . but I would not just address the issue of teaching social studies by packaged software. I would ask: How can we use the computer as a tool in social studies to have kids handle large amounts of data, draw conclusions, and do a lot of independent research on their own?

Q How likely is it that the computer's potential for enhancing literacy will be realized?

A It just takes a commitment to exploit the hardware and to do the hard work of getting decent software that exploits the hardware. That just isn't happening right now.

The most important current, and potentially continuing, obstacle is quality software. And the possibility exists that, with continuing inane software, the kids will get turned off and the teachers will continue to want them to use drill-and-practice for certain things and the kids will just become bored stiff.

The other potential obstacle is the unknowns in the computer marketplace right now. If the computer companies begin to get cold feet regarding the home market, or possibly the school market, then the so-called computer revolution is going to grind to a halt.

Q How should policymakers evaluate what is on the market and in effect pick the best of the software available to teach reading, writing, language, social studies, and the humanities?

A Software needs to be selected in relation to the needs of the curriculum that are not being met effectively by other mediums, including the teacher or the textbook. School people need to know what's out there.

One of the mistakes that a lot of schools are making right now, as far as policy regarding software, is that they are buying software that is redundant of the things they're doing well themselves. The first thing that schools should do in setting up policy is to ask: What are we looking to do with software? Can we identify things that we don't do too well right now that maybe software can do better?

Q Some scholars argue that computers (along with television and other forms of high technology) make it less important that people learn to read and write. Even if that isn't the case, they note that young people may believe it and thus be much less motivated to master the traditional literacy skills. How do you respond to those arguments?

A Given the opportunity to use computers for writing—that is, word processing—I believe young people will in fact write more than they ever have and write better. As for reading, I think it will be shown that computers, unlike television, increase the need to read. Both of the things I'm saying, however, really depend on the attitudes that schools take toward computers and how they use them. If they use computers for providing experiences that are primarily drill-and-practice questions answered with multiple-choice responses requiring single key strokes, then I think the potential for achieving what I've described will remain undeveloped. □

lesson but also teach them to become more aware of what is going on in their heads as they read. "Poor readers," in particular, "are notorious for their failure to self-monitor comprehension," says Annemarie Sullivan Palincsar, professor of education at Michigan State University.

To correct this problem, Ms. Palincsar and a colleague at Michigan State taught groups of learning-disabled junior-high students who had problems with comprehension to: summarize what they had read; generate questions about it; predict what might be discussed next in the text; and find what was unclear in the text and try to clarify it.

These activities were taught through a method known as "reciprocal teaching," in which the students and teacher take turns assuming the role of teacher and asking each other questions about sections of expository text.

In two separate studies, the researchers found that students' ability to answer comprehension questions, using reading that had not been used in the training sessions, improved significantly. Students typically achieved 70 percent accuracy by the 15th day of training. Moreover, these effects remained eight weeks after the training ended.

In his review of the literature, Mr. Pehrsson of Idaho State University concluded that the use of reciprocal questioning, of predictive questions, and of broad questions that help children integrate what they have read all improve comprehension. Teaching children how to summarize in writing what they have read also improves comprehension, he found.

These new approaches have broad implications for the schools, researchers contend. They are all much more "student-centered," says Mr. Herber of Syracuse. Further, he and others note, they require a much more active dialogue between teacher and students, with students eventually learning both to use comprehension skills on their own and to take greater responsibility in class. Such methods also suggest that teachers must be responsible for fewer students at one time.

Comprehension instruction takes time—not only to teach children but to train teachers, the research indicates. In case studies funded by the National Institute of Education, school districts on the average took three to five years to implement new programs.

The new approaches are in line with many of the recommendations made in recent studies of education, including those of Theodore R. Sizer, Mortimer J. Adler, Mr. Goodlad, and Ernest L. Boyer. All four reports called for greater interaction between students and teachers, more responsibility for students in the classroom, greater depth in the content of the curriculum, and an increased focus on reading in school.

But whether teachers and students are ready and able to make the shift to a heavier emphasis on "reading to learn" remains to be seen.

"The big $40,000 question," says Mr. Pearson, "is learning how to learn from texts—the difference between implanting knowledge, and teaching students to gather information themselves. We've been talking about that ever since we began the democracy." □

TEACHING

Continued from Page L19

kinds of student-populations—predominantly black, white, or Mexican-American.

"I think [the student of teaching] should get a taste of more than one side of the pie," Mr. Harris says. "I grew up where it was kind of rough. If you had a piece of candy and you didn't want to give some guy a piece, you might have to fight him. Some teachers who come from the city haven't been exposed to that, and [when it happens in their classroom] it hits them like a bomb."

"I moved from Montana to Virginia," Mr. Jacobson adds. "I walked into a classroom that was 75 percent black and I was really lost then. That's a whole new ballgame."

Some say that practical experience in the classroom should be required not only of the students of teaching but also of their instructors.

"Most of them haven't been teaching students in years, other than college students," Ms. Beckman says. "So this has been a great disappointment, I think, when you go to school."

"We have a number of individuals," Mr. Sava says, "who are teaching and training teachers today who perhaps haven't been in an

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TEACHING

Continued from Preceding Page

elementary school for 10 or 15 years, and conditions have changed so much in our society that if these individuals have not been in such schools, then they do not understand what is happening."

James B. Binko, dean of teacher education at Towson State University in Maryland, agrees that clinical training is important but warns that it is not enough.

Continuing Education

It is unrealistic, he argues, for a teacher "to expect to rely on what he gained in four years of undergraduate education to prepare not only for the first year of teaching, but also for the next 15 years. The next vital step is for that person to be involved extensively in a program of continuing education."

Teachers say they find such programs useful, but only if they are relevant to their classroom work. The best programs, they say, are designed by teachers. They also think sharing ideas with other teachers would be beneficial but note that is often impossible.

In his study of schooling, Mr. Goodlad found that teachers are normally isolated from one another and do not often come together to discuss curricular and instructional changes.

"You're pretty limited," Ms. Beckman of Alexandria says. "You can't run across the hall easily. It's bad enough trying to go to the bathroom while you're teaching, much less to spend some time discussing an idea."

Between pre-kindergarten and 8th grade, a child attends school for more than 9,000 hours—more than twice the time spent in high school and more than the time spent in high school and college combined, says Allan Shedlin Jr., founder of the Elementary School Study Group.

The group, formed by a group of elementary-school educators in 1983 on the premise that "next to the family, the elementary school is the most important institution in a child's life," has announced plans to conduct studies of elementary schools in an attempt to generate reform.

"It is commonly accepted that what is learned in elementary school undergirds and provides the foundation for all future learning," Mr. Shedlin says. "And it is also commonly accepted that there is less regard for elementary schools than for any other level of formal schooling."

"What has happened, unfortunately," Mr. Sava says, "is that because of the focus on secondary schools, funds are being moved from elementary [schools] to support secondary [schools], and that's a big mistake."

Recommendations for Reform

Those involved at the elementary level see numerous areas in which policies affecting their teaching could be changed. Among the recommendations of educators interviewed are:

- That formal schooling begin at age 4 to lessen the gap between students who attend preschools and those who do not.
- That some sort of retention policy be established in elementary schools so that a child does not automatically advance to the next grade until he or she masters certain skills. Such a policy, teachers caution, should take note of the problems involved in mixing older with younger children.
- That standardized goals for kindergarten be established.
- That students studying to become teachers begin practical classroom training early in their college careers so they can better ascertain whether the profession is right for them and be better prepared for their first teaching job. In the Harris survey, 90 percent of the teachers said they favored requiring new graduates to serve apprenticeships before they are certified as teachers.
- That guidance counselors and social workers be employed full time in elementary schools to counsel troubled children.

"It's almost as if there are no problems in elementary school," says Mr. Jacobson, "and then in secondary school they seem to get attention.

"But by then," he adds, "it's only remediation." □

PERSPECTIVES ON READING

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TRACKING

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Another problem with the tracking system, researchers contend, is that students often become permanently locked into a particular track and are not given an opportunity to move in and out of ability groups. Studies have found that too often on the lower tracks teachers' expectations are low, students' self-esteem is low, the peer models are poor, the subject matter is uninteresting, and the teaching is uninspired and ineffective.

In addition, studies have found that the tracking system exerts a strong influence over students' friendship patterns in school. The researchers note that students have limited contact with peers of other backgrounds and that tracking contributes to social problems—dropouts and delinquency, for example—that the schools try to prevent.

Ms. Oakes says that the "kids in the bottom tracks get far less of the educational things we know are good—less time on instruction, lower expectations, less time on learning—and more time spent on getting kids to behave."

Differing Expectations

Ms. Oakes, who has conducted studies on the subject and has written a book to be published next year called *Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality*, argues that teachers' expectations of students vary depending on the track "both in the content-oriented goals and behavioral objectives."

In the upper tracks, she says, teachers encourage students to be "independent and figure out their interests," while the emphasis in the lower tracks is on "respecting the teacher, being neat, filling out forms, putting folders away neatly, and being compliant."

"It seems there's an inequity in who gets what kind of encouragement," Ms. Oakes asserts. Such inequality in the schools continues without question, she adds, because it is a reflection of "the way things are" in society.

The conventional wisdom is, according to Ms. Oakes, that "those in the high tracks are there because they deserve and have earned it," and to consider anything else would "conflict with our notion of merit."

The situations Ms. Oakes describes all figure in the Mobile desegregation case, which is before U. S. District Judge William Brevard Hand. The school system's student-assignment process, according to James U. Blacksher, the lawyer for the plaintiffs, has resulted in greater numbers of low-achieving black students attending segregated schools.

Mr. Blacksher says ability grouping in the county's schools "is extremely formalized and rigid, beginning with students in the 1st grade." The result is that by the time black students finish school, he says, "they are much further behind than their white counterparts."

Testimony presented during the trial last fall in U. S. District Court for the Southern District of Alabama revealed "glaring racial discrimination" in the 65,000-student system, maintains Mr. Blacksher. "They instituted a rigid ability-grouping system and justified it on grounds of what they called 'educational common sense.' But they made no effort to see if they were meeting their objectives and returning students to their peer groups."

An assessment of students' records, Mr. Blacksher says, found that "there was a great difference in the black and white achievement scores" and, he contends, that gap is increasing at a rapid rate. The assessment also found that "low achievement appeared to be related to disproportionate numbers of black students assigned to the low-ability groups."

Of the 65,000 students in the district, about 42 percent are black. Yet at the middle-school level, according to Mr. Blacksher, the percentage of black students in low-ability groups was 20 percent higher than their representation in the total student body. At the high-school level, black students' representation in low-tracked courses was similarly disproportionate.

In some schools, says Mr. Blacksher, the discrepancy was found to be as high as 60 percent. "It's tracking based on achievement results—how well the students score on standardized tests—and the subjective judgment of teachers and principals."

Declared Unconstitutional

The issues raised by the plaintiffs in the Mobile case are nearly identical to those argued in a suit filed in U. S. District Court for the District of Columbia in the early 1960's challenging the legality of tracking in the District of Columbia Public Schools. In that suit, *Hobson* v. *Hansen*, the court found in 1967 that the district's tracking system was unconstitutional and ordered its elimination.

Developed in 1955 by D.C. school officials following court-ordered integration of the schools, the four-level tracking system provided a basic or special academic curriculum for slow learners; a general program of vocational courses for students not planning to go to college; a college-preparatory program for those students expected to continue their education after high school; and an honors program for academically gifted students.

George Margolies, legal counsel for the D.C. schools, explains that the court ruled that the concept of ability grouping "in and of itself is not inherently unconstitutional," a perspective that subsequent litigation has upheld. But, he adds, what the court found wrong was the way in which the district had implemented the tracking system.

Over the years, according to Mr. Margolies, the tracking system had the effect of assigning disadvantaged students to the low tracks and wealthy students to the higher tracks without providing the opportunity to move from those tracks. About 90 percent or more of the students, he notes, ended up in permanent assignments. The court, he says, also found that less money was being spent for students in the low tracks.

Mr. Margolies says the court also took issue with the use of unvalidated aptitude tests as a means of assigning students. "The tracking system was found unconstitutional and ordered disbanded mainly because of the rigid nature of the system and the schools' failure to provide remedial education to give students the opportunity to move up," he asserts.

The local school board decided not to appeal the court decision, agreeing that on the whole, according to Mr. Margolies, the ruling was fair. However, then-Superintendent Carl F. Hansen, who was instrumental in developing the schools' tracking system, filed an appeal on his own and in 1968 resigned over differences with the school board on the issue.

For Some, 'An Embarrassment'

Mr. Blacksher maintains that the plaintiffs in the Mobile case "are not asking for total, unqualified elimi-

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TEXTBOOKS

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pre-development studies to determine the need for a specific textbook; the research of the author or authors who have been chosen to write the book; and post-publication field testing of the book.

Development of a textbook begins with the identification by a company's editors and outside consultants of a subject area and grade level in which a new book or series might be marketable, according to Paul Goldstein, author of *Changing the American Schoolbook: Law, Politics, and Technology*.

Following that phase, in which competitors' products are also analyzed, editors attempt to choose several authors—usually from schools of education—who are interested in developing materials according to the criteria the publishers have established, says Gary Eisenberger, president of Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company.

"Different publishers put different emphases on different pieces" in determining what the market wants, says Ms. Paul. "Some publishers will use academic consultants who have done special work in the reading area.

"Some publishers will rely on their own field staff and on that staff's ability to be in touch with the market, with their ear to the ground, listening carefully to what their customers are saying about the product that they presently have out in published form and how it competes with everything else out on the market. An important part of that strategy is to pay a great deal of attention to doing a competitive analysis."

Authors in Name Only

Authors range from education-school researchers and administrators to high-school curriculum specialists and teachers. When a publisher pays royalties to an author, "what you're really paying for is research and development," according to Richard Morgan, president of Scott, Foresman & Company, one of the largest publishers of elementary and secondary textbooks. "You're paying for his understanding the research and translating it into something practical."

During the approximately five years it takes to develop, write, and produce a textbook series, a supervising in-house editor oversees the product's development, usually with the assistance of a team of in-house editors and subject-matter and grade-level consultants, according to Mr. Goldstein.

"Authors don't really write textbooks," notes Mr. Morgan.

"What is now happening a great deal is a thing called 'managed text development,' " according to Ms. Paul, the Alexandria, Va., publisher.

"There will be consultants who will be the people who in former years would have been the authors. Now these people are the consultants, and they do not actually write; they will advise."

"The people who actually do the writing, once these people have created this structure, are other people," she explains.

"They're former teachers, they're former editors of publishing houses, and they're people who have been writers who wandered into educational publishing through one door or another."

In subject areas such as history, she notes, publishers recruit authors who are "on the firing line in those subjects." But, she says, "We don't imagine for one second that we're going to get manuscript from them that we can use."

In past years, the schedules to develop a book series were "if not leisurely, at least much longer than they are now," says Ms. Paul. "Sometimes in the old, traditional publishing game, a basal series . . . would take from three to five years to develop. And the publishers would think of themselves as pushed in that time. The construct for the staff would be that there were these authors who were on thrones, if you will, and then their manuscript trickled down from the thrones to the editors, and the editors would sometimes rewrite it and sometimes not."

Now, says Ms. Paul, that is no longer the case. "It is always rewritten. I don't know of a case in which a basal reading series author is authoring. The number of checkpoints, the complexity of construction, has become beyond the capacity of one group, one team of authors, however well-meaning and however well-positioned as professionals and as famous academics they are. And you must work, then, within the timeframe, which is now a year to develop a whole series. I know of one publisher that developed its current basal reading series in that amount of time."

Field Testing

Following the writing and development stage, publishers frequently field test their materials.

"The publishers do a certain amount of field testing," notes Ramsey Selden, a senior research associate with the National Commission on Excellence in Education, which recommended last year that publishers report the results of field tests to those responsible for buying instructional materials.

"The commission was asking for something more along the lines of learner verification, where the objectives—the goals that the materials are supposed to accomplish—are laid out and identified; the material is tried out in the field to determine how well it accomplishes those goals and objectives; and the material is then revised according to the findings," he says.

"Today, there is more testing of manuscripts before they're published," says Marlowe G. Teig, senior vice-president and director of Houghton Mifflin Company's school division. "We attempt to get geographic representation. We also attempt to get socio-economic representation, and we attempt to hit urban, suburban, and rural schools." Houghton-Mifflin's research department, he notes, has eight full-time employees.

Like many of the nation's elementary and secondary publishers, D.C. Heath & Company has found that field testing leads to rising sales, according to Albert Bursma Jr., general manager of its school division. "It probably adds a year to the process," he says, but is worth the investment.

Ms. Paul also points to the use of "focus groups"—sessions in which teachers, administrators, and subject-area specialists evaluate a publishers' product or the idea for a product—as a way to test textbooks' acceptability. "Every time a focus group meets, it's a least $5,000," she notes.

Reluctance To Invest

But critics have noted that publishing firms have been somewhat reluctant to invest in basic research and development. One reason, according to Mr. Selden, is because such field testing "is expensive and time consuming, and because the marketplace has not generally demanded exhaustive evaluation information as part of the process of choosing a book."

And Mr. Noble of Paine, Webber notes: "The industry does not generate a large amount of money for basic research and, typically, it relies on the research generated by the educational profession from which and into which its personnel frequently move."

Moreover, despite the sophistication of the developmental activities the publishers do carry out, some critics suggest that they gain more by not changing textbook series in which they have invested than by coming up with a new product. Because state and local adoption committees require publishers to demonstrate an established level of experience and resources, and often find it easier to select familiar textbooks, the publishers are in effect encouraged to publish a relatively unchanged product, the critics maintain.

Firms see little profit in innovative materials that schools will not purchase, according to Mr. Goldstein, who writes that "they direct their efforts instead to well-worn paths, adding just enough surface touches to suggest freshness."

Ms. Paul notes that publishers are pressured both to revise and to maintain the status quo in their products. "People say that they want something new," she says. "And they have a state mandate very often demanding that if they're going to buy something, that they buy something within a certain copyright year. However, the demands placed on overworked teachers and the need to meet curriculum mandates and improve standardized test scores often create a situation in which the status quo ends up being maintained."

"So how do you put out new materials and maintain the status quo? Let me tell you, that's hard," she adds.

"One of the standard conversations that people will have [if they are revising a book] is, 'How much of a book can we afford to change? . . . How different can we be from the rest of the market?' " —A.B. & L.O.

TEACHING

Continued from Page L23

that follow in the teaching of reading, the vowel sounds. They will teach kids how to use context as a way to identify words that they may not know. They will be basic courses on how to effectively teach reading.

But what is adequate and acceptable today as training may not continue to be adequate and acceptable. Very soon, if not now, elementary teachers need to have literacy skills in the area of computer technology, and it's very rare for people to have had that in their preparation programs.

Q Analyses of elementary schooling suggest that teachers are not doing enough to help students "comprehend" what they read and to continue developing their reading skills after the first three grades. Is that true, in your view?

A The work taken in teaching reading, the work that is emphasized in preservice preparation does deal most specifically with what we call 'word-attack skills,' the ability to read as opposed to understanding the reading process in greater depth.

Pupils are taught to use contextual skills, they're taught phonetic analysis, they're taught those kinds of things without the more advanced reading skills. One of the reasons for that is when you've got one course that deals with language arts, you're really forced to deal with a limited amount of content, and there simply isn't time in the existing program to get at what you're talking about.

The other reason is that if somebody is teaching, particularly in grades 4, 5, and 6, those individuals need the skills that are phonetic analysis, are context, are basic reading skills if they're going to deal at all with remedial reading.

Q In education schools, what emphasis is placed on training prospective elementary-level teachers to teach students to write?

A The emphasis that you'll get on that is part of one course, and that would be the language-arts course, where you're also involved with spelling and speaking skills.

Q Does that training reflect the current interest in having teachers teach reading and writing "across the curriculum?"

A They're encouraged to teach [writing] across the curriculum. . . . I don't think that writing stops when you're dealing with science or when you're dealing with social studies. You can use the social studies as a vehicle to reinforce the need for writing that is not writing for writing's sake but writing for effective communication.

Q Why don't education schools more closely integrate theory and practice?

A It is integrated more than perhaps some of the people realize who [say they did not get enough practice-teaching]. For example, it's very unusual for a good college of education not to incorporate field experience in the methods—by that, I mean that if you're teaching a math-methods course or if you're teaching writing, to actually involve those people in the methods course in teaching kids.

They won't be teaching 30 kids or 25 kids in a classroom in a typical situation, but they might be meeting with a group of four kids or working with identifying or diagnosing some reading problems for two or three kids. I think that as long as we're restricted to a four-year preparation program, we can't do much more than one semester if we are to meet the expectations of school people: that is, to send out some people who have some preparation for entering that school. □

Donald Graves
A RESEARCHER LEARNS TO WRITE

This collection of Graves' work over the last ten years ranges from his first published article to his most recent. Included are an unpublished personal critique of the writing process movement, the Ford Foundation report, the N.I.E. report summary of a study of how children learn to compose and sixteen other papers. Each paper is prefaced by a specially written introduction. The book shows Graves' development as a writer as well as a researcher of children's writing.

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Frank Smith
ESSAYS INTO LITERACY

Sixteen papers by this provocative observer and critic of literacy education. Many of the essays in this book are classics, and some are published here for the first time, including "Afterthoughts"—a response to the questions and challenges he most frequently receives from teachers.

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DESEGREGATION

"In the name of desegregation, we have in many instances surrendered to the courts the day-to-day responsibility of operating our public schools," says the President's top civil-rights officer, who predicts an imminent end to mandatory busing.

See Page 11.

DOCUMENTARY

ABC recently took the unusual step of pre-empting an entire evening of prime-time programming to present a documentary on public education. For an interview with the correspondent and principal writer for the show, Marshall Frady . . .

See Page 24.

DAY CARE

In hearings this month that were called "the most in-depth Congressional look at child care in a decade," witnesses called for greater federal involvement in and expanded funding for day-care programs before and after school.

See Page 12.

EDUCATION WEEK

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Activism Spurring Politics of Church and State

Pope Asks Public Aid for Parental School Choice

By Cindy Currence

Arguing that "a totally secular school system" in a modern nation would not satisfy "the legitimate claims" of religious groups and would deny "a fundamental right" to parents, Pope John Paul II last week told Roman Catholic educators in Canada that governments have a responsibility to support educational services for all.

Catholic officials in Washington said that the Pope's address was one of the few public pronouncements on the subject he has made since becoming leader of the Roman Catholic Church in 1978.

"We cannot leave God at the schoolhouse door," the Pope said, echoing language President Reagan has used in expressing support for a Constitutional amendment to permit prayer in public schools.

"Society is called upon to provide for and support with public funding those types of schools that correspond to the deepest aspirations of its citizens," the Pope said, adding that the role of the modern state is to respond to these expectations "within the limits of the common good."

The Pope, who spoke at the Basilica of St. John the Baptist in Newfoundland, said other nations should look to Canada as an example of a country in which public aid to religious schools has worked without conflict.

BOB STRAWN/NC PHOTO

Pope John Paul II

For excerpts from the Pope's address, see Page 13.

"In a society such as Canada's," he said, "people's freedom to associate and enter into certain groups or institutional endeavors with the aim of fulfilling their expectations according to their own values is a fundamental democratic right. This right im-

Continued on Page 17

Public-School Advocates Readying Opposition

By Cindy Currence

Coming amid a Presidential campaign already flavored by church-state issues, the statement last week by Pope John Paul II calling for government aid to religious schools is likely to heighten the activity of a growing number of public-school officials and advocates who oppose public support for private educational institutions.

"The Pope's statement does not help our efforts by any stretch of the imagination," said Arnold F. Fege, director of governmental relations for the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, which opposes public aid to private education.

"We're going to have to work very hard now to educate our membership and point out that we need to focus on public education," he said.

According to Mr. Fege, the battleground for those fighting public aid to private schools has shifted in the past year from the federal to the state level, and state affiliates of the P.T.A. and other education groups now are concentrating their efforts on combating the private-aid proposals in state legislatures.

"We are not opposed to private schools,"

Continued on Page 16

Employees Union Sues E.P.A. on Asbestos Risk

Seeks Cleanup Rules In 30 Days or Less

By Lynn Olson

WASHINGTON—The Service Employees International Union, which represents some 100,000 school-maintenance workers around the country, last week filed suit against the Environmental Protection Agency in an attempt to force the agency to issue within 30 days rules requiring the removal of hazardous asbestos from the nation's public schools.

Union officials said it has been five years since the agency first committed itself to issuing rules concerning the abatement of easily crumbling or powdered asbestos in public and private schools. But "the E.P.A. has refused to take any meaningful step[s]" since that time, according to John J. Sweeney, president of the S.E.I.U.

David Ryan, a spokesman for the agency, said last week that the E.P.A. did not yet have "any official reaction" to the complaint. Both Mr. Ryan and Susan Vogt, special assistant to Alvin L. Alm, deputy ad-

Continued on Page 15

Major Study Finds Preschool 'Pays Off' for the Disadvantaged

By Anne Bridgman

Disadvantaged children who participate in high-quality preschool programs significantly outperform those who have not participated in such programs, according to the final results of the first major longitudinal study to measure the effects of preschool education on the lives of students.

"On a wide range of measures of school and life success, the study shows that by age 19, the latest age for which complete evidence is available, young people who had attended a quality preschool program on average significantly outperformed youngsters who had not," according to a report on the study released last week.

"Preschool pays off for its participants and society because it reduces costs for special education, welfare, and the criminal-justice system," added the report, which is titled *Changed Lives: The Effects of the Perry Preschool Program on Youths Through Age 19.*

Continued on Page 14

DOUGLAS GORALSKI

"Investment in the preschool program was a good investment for society," reports a study of the socioeconomic benefits of high-quality preschool education for disadvantaged students.

City Agency Cites Mismanagement in New York Schools

By James Hertling

The New York City public-school system's inability and unwillingness to enforce its own rules has resulted in systemwide mismanagement and corruption, city investigators charged in a report last week.

The report by the city's Department of Investigations alleged, for example, that the New York City Board of Education does not know how many of its 56,628 teachers are in the classroom or are performing administrative duties; that a $42-million extracurricular-pay program for teachers is "routinely abused"; and that the board's failure to monitor contracts with private companies has "deprived the board of the very services for which it has contracted . . . [and] has manifest health and safety ramifications."

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IN SUMMARY

A School Away From School
Teachers and parents may become increasingly at odds over the use of home computers, a researcher speculates. **Story on Page 5.**

Stricter Standards in Georgia
A state commission has recommended tougher standards for training, certifying, and evaluating school administrators. **Story on Page 6.**

The Voyage of the Mimi
A multi-media mathematics- and science-education project premièred on public television last week. **Story on Page 6.**

The Price of Not Striking?
The Boston school district is suing the teachers' union for monetary damages for threatening to strike last year. **Story on Page 8.**

Hispanic, Si!
A marketing survey finds that a growing number of Hispanics think of themselves as Hispanics first, Americans second. **Story on Page 8.**

A Core Curriculum in North Carolina . . .
The state's education department has issued a plan to ensure that a minimum course of study is offered to all students. **Story on Page 9.**

. . . And a Step Up for Teachers
The state will pilot a $110-million career ladder in 16 districts next year as part of a school-improvement plan. **Story on Page 9.**

Olympian Struggle on Capitol Hill
Advocates and opponents of a controversial civil-rights bill clashed on Capitol Hill last week. **Story on Page 11.**

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THE WEEK

FEDERAL

N.E.A.-Backed Bill Founders in House

House Democratic leaders last week postponed a vote on a multi-billion-dollar education bill promoted extensively by the National Education Association, effectively killing it for the remainder of the current session of the Congress, according to House aides.

The staff members said that a number of House Democrats raised last-minute concerns over voting for the high-cost bill, which has been attacked by the Reagan Administration as a "budget buster."

And, the sources said, many Democrats urged their leaders to let the bill die after learning the morning of the scheduled vote of Republican plans to offer school-prayer and tuition tax-credit amendments to it.

Representative Augustus F. Hawkins, Democrat of California and chairman of the Education and Labor Committee, agreed to allow several hours of debate but not to bring the bill and its amendments to the floor for a vote.

The proposed American defense education act, H.R. 5609, would have established a fund for grants to local school districts to improve their programs in mathematics, science, foreign languages, technology, and for other educational needs.

According to Congressional Budget Office figures, the program would have cost about $8 billion over the next five years.

The N.E.A. remains "very pleased with the progress that the bill has made," a spokesman for the group said. "[This is] just another step in getting it passed by the Congress" either in this session or the next, which begins in January 1985.

Congressional Study Reports Deep Cuts In Education Funds

Between fiscal 1980 and 1984, federal spending for education fell 21 percent, when adjusted for inflation, a Congressional analysis has concluded. But despite numerous Presidential proposals to reform the government's role in education, federal support "appears strikingly similar to such support prior to the Reagan Administration," it notes.

Under the President's $15.5-billion proposal for education in fiscal 1985, "actual purchasing power" of Education Department funds would have fallen to 24.7 percent of their fiscal 1980 level, according to the Aug. 20 report prepared for the Congress by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service.

Lawmakers are expected to approve about $17.2 billion in education spending for fiscal 1985.

Funding for the six major federal programs in elementary and secondary schools fell, when adjusted for inflation, between fiscal 1980 and fiscal 1984, according to the report. Funding declines ranged from 9.3 percent—for the state-grant program for special education—to 55.8 percent for programs now funded under Chapter 2 block grants.

In the other programs, compensatory-education funds have fallen 19.7 percent; bilingual-education funds, 39.8 percent; impact aid, 40.3 percent; and vocational-education funds, 29.8 percent, according to the report.

Of the three higher-education programs listed—Pell Grants, Guaranteed Student Loans, and College Work Study—only funds for G.S.L.'s have increased in real dollars, the report noted.

For fiscal 1985, the Congress blocked a proposal to increase the previous year's appropriation of $550 million by $300 million. The program was funded at $550 million in fiscal 1980.

The study also reported that the Chapter 2 block-grants program is the only one of Mr. Reagan's proposals that the Congress has accepted. Otherwise, "Congressional response to the President's proposals generally has not been positive."

The C.R.S. report was this year's update of a periodic analysis of the effect of Mr. Reagan's budget cuts in education.

NATIONAL

Incidence of Measles Reported Up in 1984

The incidence of measles in the United States increased sharply to 1,759 reported cases during the first 26 weeks of 1984, compared with 1,095 cases during the comparable period of 1983, according to the national Centers for Disease Control.

Federal health officials, however, were quick to point out that although the number of measles cases had increased 60.6 percent compared with the same period in 1983, the total is still far below that in the prevaccine era, when an average of more than 525,000 cases were reported annually.

In addition, the C.D.C. noted in the Sept. 7 edition of *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* that although the overall incidence rate increased, the number of states reporting measles decreased during the first half of 1984 compared with the same period in 1983. Twenty-four states reported no cases of measles in the first half of 1984, while 22 states and the District of Columbia reported none during the first half of 1983.

Among children 10 to 14 years old, the number of cases increased more than twofold during the first half of 1984, compared with all of 1983, according to the report. In the first 26 weeks of this year, there were 515 reported cases of measles among children in this age group, compared with 195 cases for the entire previous year.

"Greater emphasis needs to be placed on ensuring that persons 10-14 years old and 15-19 years old have evidence of measles immunity," the C.D.C. strongly suggested. "Enactment and vigorous enforcement of regulations requiring all students in grades kindergarten through 12 to have evidence of immunity is an important means of ensuring high levels of measles immunity."

Note to Subscribers

Because of its increased number of pages and extended press run just prior to the Labor Day holiday, the Sept. 5 issue of *Education Week*, which included a special report on literacy and schooling, was delivered to readers much later than usual. We apologize for the delay.

STATES

Education Deans Propose Certification Changes in Arkansas

The deans of nine colleges of education in Arkansas have endorsed a proposal to allow people who do not have education degrees to be certified to teach.

The plan would allow noncertified individuals to work as "supervised interns" for three years while completing the education courses necessary for certification, the deans said in a proposal sent to the Arkansas Education, Certification, and Evaluation Committee last month.

The deans' proposal also recommended that elementary-education students be required to have a major in elementary education that includes 18 semester-hours in an academic field and that student teaching be expanded from the current eight weeks to not less than 12 weeks.

The deans represented colleges of education at the Arkansas Polytechnic University, Arkansas State University, Harding University, Henderson State University, Southern Arkansas University, the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, the University of Arkansas at Monticello, and the University of Central Arkansas.

Continued from Page 3

19 percent have specialist's degrees.

Twenty-four percent said they earn less than $40,000 per year, while 4 percent reported earning $70,000 or more per year. Women superintendents, who accounted for only 3 percent of the respondents, reported receiving "much the same pay" as men. More than half of the black superintendents who responded reported earning more than $55,000 a year, in part, they said, because they are most likely to be employed in large, urban systems.

In the survey, superintendents also gave their views on some of the most controversial school issues of the day: 79 percent of the respondents said they do not support busing to integrate public schools; 72 percent said they do not support a constitutional amendment to permit prayer in public schools; 68 percent said they support mandated competency tests at the state level for administrative certification; and 70 percent said they would support such tests for teachers.

Betting Addiction Warning Signals Seen In New Jersey Pupils

A survey conducted by New Jersey's Council on Compulsive Gambling has found that nearly 40 percent of high-school students in the state exhibit at least one sign of becoming chronic bettors.

The survey involved a poll of 892 students around the state. They were asked whether any one of seven indicators that experts say signal compulsive-gambling tendencies applied to them.

The indicators include family problems, chronic lying, and large debts that are the result of gambling.

Robert Klein, executive director of the council, said that if a person showed problems in at least three of the seven problem areas, he or she could be considered a compulsive gambler.

About 8.4 percent of the students showed problems in at least three of the seven problem areas, the survey found. Some 1.9 percent of the students reported having five of the warning signs.

Msgr. Joseph Dunne, president of the National Council on Compulsive Gambling in New York, said the survey found that the problem most often related to gambling was family disruption. Compulsive gambling, like other addictions, can lead to family arguments, break-ups, and even child abuse, he added.

Monsignor Dunne said the increase in legalized gambling around the country, and therefore its increased availability, has attracted a growing number of young bettors.

"We have created a whole new generation of gamblers," he said. "One state after another has legalized gambling since 1964, and not only legalized it but promoted it. Young people are seriously affected. They see an easy way to make it for life, with a little luck, and figure, 'Why bother with school or studies?' "

About 47 states and the District of Columbia have some form of legalized gambling, Monsignor Dunne said.

QUIZMASTER

In what year and what country was the first kindergarten opened?

(The answer will be included with next week's quiz.)

Answer to last week's quiz: The University of Michigan is credited with having established in 1879 the first permanent faculty chair in any American college or university devoted to the preparation of teachers.

Readers are invited to submit interesting and/or arcane questions involving education (with answers) for possible inclusion in Quizmaster. *Please send your name, address, and phone number and indicate the source of your information.* Education Week *will pay $10 for each item used. Send entries to:* Quizmaster, Education Week, *1333 New Hampshire Ave., N.W., Suite 560, Washington, D.C. 20036.*

PEOPLE

William Bradford Reynolds, assistant attorney general for civil rights, this month told the U. S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit that a federal judge illegally extended his authority and misinterpreted a 1980 consent decree when he ordered the U. S. government to pay Chicago schools $103.8 million in desegregation aid for this year and more in subsequent years. *(See Education Week, Aug. 29, 1984.)*

Mr. Reynolds reiterated the U. S. Justice Department's position that the government is not bound by the vague language of the consent decree to a broad funding plan for Chicago and that U. S. District Judge Milton I. Shadur's Aug. 13 order to that effect violated the constitutional separation of powers.

"For the first time in over 200 years, a member of this judiciary has directed the President of the United States on how to conduct himself in the legislative arena," Mr. Reynolds said.

The appeals court, which had temporarily blocked an order requiring the government to pay Chicago $28.8 million immediately, is expected to rule on the government's appeal by the end of September.

□

Theodore R. Sizer, chairman of the education department at Brown University and author of *Horace's Compromise*, has proposed that superior high-school students be offered free tuition at any of their state's public colleges and universities.

Speaking at a Williams College convocation, Mr. Sizer recommended that, for example, Massachusetts students who demonstrate their proficiency in five areas be awarded a new "Horace Mann Scholar's Diploma" that would entitle them to a free education at any state college or university. The five areas are: communications skills, mathematics and science, literature and the arts, history and civics, and foreign languages and culture.

"Students know that they have to perform well, not just serve time," Mr. Sizer said of the plan. "And they know they will get both a sense of warm accomplishment and substantial benefits if they succeed."

Under the proposal, a student would prove his or her prowess by taking tests or carrying out some other set of tasks demonstrating capability. According to Mr. Sizer, the exercises would be set by state-appointed committees or administered by professional and scholarly associations, such as the College Board.

□

The Auburn, Me., school board has denied a request by the parents of a 9-year-old student for permission to enroll their daughter in courses at the University of Maine at Augusta.

William and Andrea Cutler requested permission to enroll their daughter, **Jenny Cutler**, in the university for the second consecutive year and to provide the balance of her education at home. Board members voted on Sept. 5 to deny that request until Jenny takes a test showing what she learned last year.

The Cutlers, who have appealed the board's decision to the Maine Department of Education, were told by department officials that they will probably approve the necessary waiver to allow Jenny to attend the university.

Roy D. Loux, superintendent of the Auburn schools, said the district must administer some kind of assessment to monitor Jenny's instruction. The girl's mother said last week that proposal "was just not appropriate" but declined to comment further.

□

Representative Augustus F. Hawkins, Democrat of California, has been officially installed as chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee by the House Democratic Steering and Policy Committee.

First elected in 1962, Representative Hawkins now serves as chairman of the employment-opportunities subcommittee of the Education and Labor Committee. According to a spokesman in Representative Hawkins's office, the Congressman has not yet decided whether to move to another panel chairmanship—specifically, the elementary, secondary, and vocational-education subcommittee, which opened up after the death last month of the former committee chairman, Representative Carl D. Perkins, Democrat of Kentucky. He will, however, relinquish the chairmanship of the House Administration Committee.

New Life for Old School

GREG MELLIS/LEWISTON MORNING TRIBUNE

The 57-year-old Ray's Ferry School in Asotin, Idaho, assumed its new role as an annex to the Asotin County Historical Society museum last month. The wood-frame school served generations of students from the Hackberry Hollow School District, which was founded in 1885.

UPDATE

Teacher strikes in several school districts across the nation have been settled, but new strike activity has disrupted the schooling of thousands more students. *(See Education Week, Sept. 12, 1984.)*

In Michigan, strikes in Grand Rapids and Anchor Bay were settled last week. Teachers also are back at work in Cassopolis and Escanaba, and a spokesman for the National Education Association said last week that settlements were "near" in East China and River Rouge.

Teachers in Sterling, Ill., went on strike early last week and a strike began in Blue Island on Sept. 7. Last week, strikes were settled in three Illinois school districts—Granite City, Bethalto and Sycamore.

Teachers in Jersey Shore, Pa., went on strike last week, but contract agreements have been reached in Donegal, Hampfield, and Wissahickon.

New Jersey teachers were back at work last week in the Bellmawr, Clinton, Monmouth Regional, and Somerville school districts.

Strikes in Selma, Ind., and Longview, Wash., also have been settled.

□

The Anne Arundel County (Md.) School System has reached a tentative settlement with civil-liberties lawyers who last November charged administrators at an elementary school with singling out black children for disciplinary action and locking them in storage closets. *(See Education Week, Dec. 21, 1983.)*

The lawyers, who were seeking $17.3 million in damages for the parents of five children enrolled in Germantown Elementary School, argued their case last year before U. S. District Judge Walter E. Black Jr., but the trial ended in a hung jury. Lawyers representing the children initially sought a new trial but then began negotiating with the county on a settlement.

Barbara Mello, a lawyer with the Maryland American Civil Liberties Union, which represents one of the children in the suit, said the tentative agreement, which was to be filed with Judge Black last week, includes a provision that school authorities will not isolate children in school rooms as a form of discipline.

John Wisthoff, president of the county board of education, said the tentative agreement also includes about $30,000 in legal fees to be paid to the students' lawyers. However, Mr. Wisthoff, who said the county did not admit to misconduct, said he did not believe the agreement includes payment of any of the $17 million originally sought.

Ms. Mello refused to comment on the financial aspects of the case.

□

A Union County, N. J., grand jury has found no evidence of criminal wrongdoing by public and police officials in the procurement of a search warrant that led to the **seizure of student records in Summit public schools last February.** *(See Education Week, Feb. 22, 1984.)*

Summit police officers had obtained a warrant to search the school offices as part of a drug investigation they were conducting at the time. After school files were seized, however, the warrant was declared illegal by State Superior Court Judge Edward W. Beglin Jr. and the files were returned to the school officials.

Judge Beglin then ordered that a grand jury be convened to examine the incident for evidence of criminal wrongdoing on the part of public and police officials in issuing or procuring the warrant.

The grand jury found in a 99-page report released last week that the incident was caused by a "serious breakdown" in communication between Summit school administrators and city police officers.

"The police were apparently convinced that the physical seizure and subsequent review of student records was the only viable way to determine the extent of drug and other incidents at the junior high school," the report states.

Number of Teacher Strikes 1973-1983

Year	A.F.T.	N.E.A.
1983-84	12.5	73.5
82-83	12.0	83.0
1981-82	10.0	98.0
1980-81	33.0	158.0
1979-80	34.0	208.0
1978-79	33.0	143.0
1977-78	28.0	124.0
1976-77	22.0	130.0
1975-76	50.0	153.0
1974-75	29.0	77.0
1973-74	32.0	122.0

Source: Based on information provided by the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers.

Boston Sues Teachers' Union Over Threat To Strike

By Alina Tugend

The Boston School Committee decided last month to proceed with a lawsuit that labor lawyers say may be the first in the country to seek money damages from a union for threatening to strike.

The suit originated last winter during acrimonious disputes between the committee and the Boston Teachers Union over union contract provisions.

Upset over lack of progress in resolving the contract disagreements, the 6,200-member B.T.U. scheduled a walkout for Dec. 15.

The school committee countered by filing suit in Massachusetts Superior Court seeking an injunction against the scheduled strike and asking for money damages from the union under a provision of the state's collective-bargaining laws. The court declined to issue an injunction and the walkout did not occur, largely, according to a spokesman for the teachers, because union leaders on the eve of the strike recommended against it because agreement on the issues seemed near.

Up to $100,000 Sought

The school committee decided to proceed with its suit, however, seeking $50,000 to $100,000 in damages, according to Mary Jo Hollender, a lawyer for the committee.

The school committee claims the teachers' union violated a state statute prohibiting public employees from "inducing, encouraging or condoning" a strike, according to Ms. Hollender. She explained the money damages would cover costs incurred by the school committee as a consequence of having to draw up a contingency plan to cope with the threatened teachers' strike.

Union efforts to have the case dismissed failed last spring. Meanwhile, the judge in the case asked the Massachusetts Labor Relations Commission to determine whether the union committed an unfair labor practice by threatening to strike.

John Cochran, chief counsel for the state labor relations commission, said that if the commission decides to enter the case, it could be up to six months before a decision is made. "This would be the first time the issue has ever been addressed in Massachusetts," Mr. Cochran said.

Charge 'Ludicrous'

Edward Doherty, president of the B.T.U., called the school committee's suit "ludicrous."

"I think it's a waste of the taxpayers' money," he said. "It certainly looks like some sort of reprisal to me."

But Ms. Hollender said, "It's very important that we determine whether or not a union can seek to exact more generous collective-bargaining terms by threatening to strike. We are seeking to establish a principle that has not been decided before in Massachusetts—if a union is answerable in damages for threatening a strike. We don't think the fact that they didn't actually walk out should make a difference."

Lawyers for the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association said they were not aware of any other lawsuits filed against a union for merely threatening to strike.

Many Hispanics Nurture Identity, Survey Shows

Devotion to Spanish Language Is Noted

An estimated 50 percent of Hispanic Americans think of themselves as Hispanic first and American second, and more than eight out of 10 say the Spanish language is "the key to maintaining and fostering their cultural identity," according to *Spanish USA 1984*, a new study by the polling firm of Yankelovich, Skelly & White Inc.

The firm conducted the survey of the Hispanic "market" for the SIN Television Network, a Spanish-language television network with 276 affiliates.

"From 1981 to 1984, there is no sign of increased commitment to mastery of English, at the possible expense of Spanish; the commitment to Spanish is stronger if anything," says the firm's analysis of the findings. "Current language skills aside for the moment, bilingualism is the predominant *goal*—about three out of four seeing mastery of both English and Spanish as the ideal. Fluency in Spanish supersedes fluency in English as a goal, 20 percent to 6 percent."

The study found that there has been a significant increase since 1981 in the desire of Hispanic citizens to perpetuate Hispanic traditions in succeeding generations—from 89 percent in 1981 to 94 percent in 1984.

The study, which was based on interviews with 775 Hispanic Americans between the fall of 1983 and the spring of 1984, also found a "distinct blurring of differences in the way Hispanics of varying nationalities feel about each other." In 1981, 61 percent of Hispanics perceived important differences between Hispanic nationalities. In 1984, that figure had fallen to 50 percent.

The study also found that although the percentage of Hispanics who are college graduates has more than doubled since 1981, the percentage of those with one to three years of high school has declined, and there is little change in the percentage of high-school graduates.

The study also included information on the demographic characteristics of Hispanic Americans, Hispanics as consumers, and social values and cultural commitments among Hispanics.

Free copies of the report are available by writing or calling Mirta Cybulski, SIN Television Network, 460 West 42nd St., New York, N. Y. 10036; (212) 502-1300. —L.O.

Language Skills

Current language skills	Hispanics 1981	Hispanics 1984
Bilingual	47%	45%
Fluent in Spanish; enough English to get by	20	23
Know only Spanish	23	20
Fluent in English; enough Spanish to get by	9	9
Know only English	1	3
Fluent in Spanish	90	88
Fluent in English	57	57
Speak only Spanish at home	45	44
Language goals	**1981**	**1984**
Bilingualism	79	74
Fluency in Spanish	14	20
Fluency in English	7	6

Education

Educational level	Hispanics 1981	Hispanics 1984	Total U.S. 1984
8th grade or less	31%	30%	13%
1-3 years high school	30	23	17
High-school graduate	24	25	37
Some college	12	15	17
College graduate plus	3	7	16

Source: Taken from *Spanish U.S.A. 1984*, a study commissioned by SIN Inc. Copyright © 1984. Reprinted by permission of SIN Inc.

CRACKING THE CODE:

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In 72 pages and more than two dozen articles, *Education Week* examines the nation's quest for universal literacy and the role that society assigns to its schools in achieving that goal.

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Judge Upholds Disciplinary Policy

A Prince George's County, Md., circuit-court judge has upheld a district discipline policy that resulted in the expulsion earlier this year of a student for carrying a Swiss Army-type knife on school grounds.

Last April, two students reported to their teacher that a knife had fallen out of the pocket of Burleigh Odum, now 14, a student at Gwynn Park Middle School in Brandywine, Md.

Mr. Odum, who maintained he used the knife to sharpen pencils, was expelled by school administrators.

The school board upheld the expulsion in August because, members ruled, the student violated the board's code of student conduct, which prohibits carrying any sort of weapon in school.

Mr. Odum's parents subsequently brought suit against the school, requesting that their son be reinstated. Judge Jacob S. Levin, in a ruling released last week, upheld the expulsion and said the board should be the final forum for appeal in such disputes. Pending board approval, Mr. Odum will return to school in January. —A.N.T.

TEACHERS

Teachers in Idaho who object to the "liberal" politics of the National Education Association and its affiliates announced this month that they are forming their own union.

Members of the new union, Independent Educators of Idaho, decided to split from Idaho's N.E.A. affiliate after becoming increasingly disenchanted with the union's support of Democratic candidates and various controversial issues, said Dianna Robertson, president of the group and a teacher at Ammon Elementary School in Idaho Falls.

N.E.A. members must "swallow the fact that their membership dues are being used to help elect Walter Mondale and push a host of controversial noneducational issues that many oppose," Ms. Robertson said at a Sept .7 press conference to announce the new union's formation.

The N.E.A. resolutions that members of the new group find objectionable include support of affirmative action for homosexual teachers, tax-paid abortions, gun control, and the proposed Equal Rights Amendment.

"We are not particularly worried about them siphoning off any of our members," said Gale Moore, a spokesman for the Idaho Education Association, an N.E.A. affiliate.

The N.E.A. is a "democratic organization" and the stands it takes on issues have been voted on by the members of the association, Ms. Moore added.

□

The National Education Association is conducting a $1.5-million television advertising campaign this fall that will focus on the key contributions teachers make to excellence in education.

"Our new TV spots highlight teachers who create the classroom spark that fires students' imagination and desire to learn," said Mary Hatwood Futrell, president of the teachers' union.

In addition to television clips, to be aired on the NBC and ABC networks, radio versions of the advertisements will be broadcast and promotional posters will be distributed to every school in the country.

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The Council for Basic Education will award fellowships of $3,000 to teachers of the humanities in grades 9-12 to support study during the summer of 1985.

The fellowship program, now in its third year, is designed to recognize the importance of the humanities in a balanced curriculum and to give outstanding teachers an opportunity to enrich their knowledge of the humanities, said William J. Bennett, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities in a statement.

Funded by the N.E.H., the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Esther A. and Joseph Klingenstein Fund, the 150 fellowships will be awarded on April 15.

Full-time teachers with at least three-fifths of their schedule in the humanities, five years of teaching experience, and a master's degree or the equivalent are eligible.

For further information and applications, write Independent Study in the Humanities, Dept. 12, CN6331, Princeton, N. J. 08541. The deadline for applications is Dec. 1. —C.C.